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COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

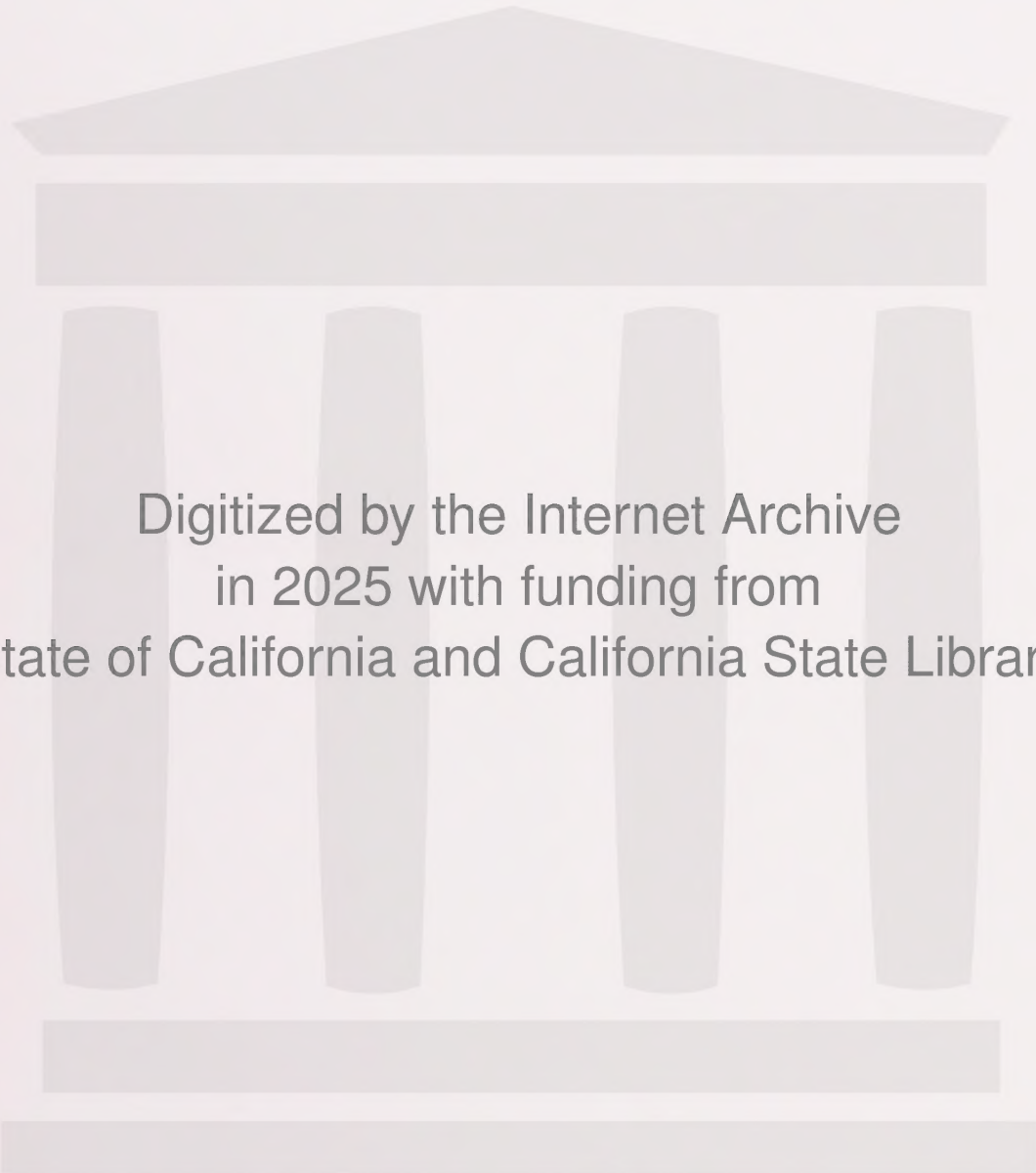
Final Report Social Services Agency Performance Audit

November 19, 1991

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November 19, 1991

Mr. Tom Duncan, Project Coordinator
County of Alameda
County Administrator's Office
1221 Oak Street, Room 555
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Duncan:

Deloitte & Touche is pleased to present the Final Report of our Performance Audit of the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA). The purpose of our review and report is to provide recommendations which will assist the County in responding to the increasing demand for services provided by SSA.

We appreciate the time, information and cooperation we received from all of the individuals involved in this review. We hope our Final Report will assist the Board of Supervisors in addressing the County's challenging human services issues.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or Gloria V. Becerra at (916) 646-4011.

Sincerely,
DELOITTE & TOUCHE

Edward T. Hilbert
Principal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deloitte & Touche (D&T) was retained by Alameda County to conduct a performance audit of the County's Social Services Agency (SSA) under the guidance of a designated Project Task Force.

We conducted a Preliminary Review and selected the following four areas for further study:

- General Assistance and Related Programs
- Aging and Adult Services Programs
- Automation
- Management

Our fieldwork and analysis were conducted over a 14 week period by a team of 10 professionals who analyzed SSA's:

- Planning and policy development
- Operational procedures and processes
- Human resource development
- Fiscal oversight and controls
- External relationships

We found many dedicated employees committed to public service, attempting to serve client's pressing needs with limited resources. Many employees have been with SSA for an extensive period of time and it seems that for many, only their commitment to people has sustained them through SSA's challenging times.

We also found a leader who was attempting to give direction to SSA through assuming multiple roles and responsibilities. These included planner and architect of some organizational restructuring which reduced reporting relationships and consolidated some support functions. This leader also forged an investment in SSA's service environment by a facilities initiative that would result in building pride, dignity, and safety for clients and employees.

These positive actions have come at a great cost, for one person cannot fulfill all the management requirements of SSA. What is required is support for more change, flexibility on policies, and an understanding that the kind of change needed by SSA will take much time and commitment by all.



Unfortunately these positive findings were overshadowed by significant issues which permeate SSA.

We found SSA to be an organization which has historically enjoyed sufficient resources and support to accomplish its purpose. But the dramatic changes in public policies regarding social services finds SSA ill-equipped to meet the challenges of the changing times.

SSA, if it is to meet these and future challenges, *must conduct business differently!*

Currently, SSA's attempts at meeting the demands of a changing environment have been to do less of the same. Most of the approaches to resolving fiscal issues are to reduce allocations, and the approaches to meeting some of the changing needs is to do nothing at all.

SSA has created a "processing factory" which places its emphasis on producing paperwork be it applications, reports, or warrants. Its operating mode is to meet and confer, solicit and report, and approve or deny. This is the approach SSA utilizes whether it is providing a service, interacting with staff, responding to the community, negotiating with unions, or presenting to the Board of Supervisors. It is the operating model adopted throughout SSA, from its executive suites to the field office's reception areas. In fact, processing *is* the service provided by SSA.

Realistically speaking, many of the processes are required by authorities external to SSA such as the State, the courts, and the federal government. Unfortunately, we found that many of SSA's approaches to meeting these mandates were to require much more internal processing than was necessary.

SSA needs to redefine its mission. Currently, the emphasis is on processing. The current Mission Statement is:

"The Social Services Agency provides financial assistance services to children and adults who are at risk, employment services, and leadership in identifying and addressing community needs."

The Agency's current Mission Statement is accompanied by a Statement of Values. This document is included as

Appendix A. Upon examination of the Mission Statement and the Statement of Values we concluded that restatement and/or clarity were warranted. The current Mission Statement is more a descriptor of what SSA does (a functional statement) rather than why it exists (a mission statement). Functions within an organization can change but its purpose most often remains the same.

A Mission Statement of a public sector organization typically includes references such as “serving the public good,” “contributing to the betterment of the community” or “serving citizens of the community.” It usually identifies the role the entity plays in a larger realm such as community, region, state, etc.

A Statement of Values typically represents a set of attributes hopefully manifested in achieving the organization’s purpose. The SSA Statement of Values appears, to be directed toward the people within the organization rather than toward the people it serves. Although one could rationalize that these values have to be exhibited internally before they could be demonstrated to the external community, this intent is not stated.

Statement of Values should complement the Mission Statement, in the case of SSA, we believe that they should be linked back to SSA’s primary purpose, namely, to serve the community.

SSA needs a Mission Statement which instills purpose, gives hope, and portrays a commitment making a difference in people’s lives through the conduct of its services which should lead to care and/or self-sufficiency.

SSA’s current organizational model and mind set cannot effectively meet the social service needs of the County of Alameda now or in the future. It must take some drastic and immediate measures if it is to remain a viable deliverer of services. These measures include:

- *Reorganize and restructure the organization* – the new organizational structure should be grounded on a vision of a social service *system* that is client-focused
- *Adopt a management focus* which is open, risk-oriented, creative, and innovative in its approaches to service delivery



SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

THE AUDIT

Deloitte & Touche (D&T) was engaged to conduct a performance audit of the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA). The performance audit was to focus on economy, efficiency, and effectiveness issues and the results of the audit were to assist SSA in achieving improvements in their operation and effectiveness of service delivery.

AUDIT BACKGROUND

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors' established policy of conducting performance audits of its agencies was the basis for this review of the Alameda County Social Services Agency.

This review was to evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency, and economy of effort regarding SSA's operations, with full recognition and understanding that the population served by the SSA are problematic in that they are; in need, difficult to serve, growing in number, and are consuming more and more of the fiscal pool of resources.

We conducted this performance audit in a period of time which could either be classified as tumultuous or opportunistic. The Project Task Force appointed by the County Board of Supervisors invested time and effort to ensure that feasible and realistic changes within SSA would result from their efforts.

The creation of the role and responsibility given to the Project Task Force represents an understanding of the need to have a broad-based perspective in approaching the design of this review, as well as sharing the ownership of the process.

This Project Task Force represents the policymakers' understanding of the different *communities* involved and impacted by the operations of SSA as well as a recognition of the magnitude of the potential problems facing SSA in regards to delivery of services.

The success of this approach was exhibited by the Project Task Force's participation in developing the Request for Interest and Qualification, the Request for Proposals, conducting the evaluation and selection process, guiding the revised Scope of Work, and attendance and active participation at all Project Status meetings.



SCOPE OF STUDY

The Request for Proposal (RFP) developed by the Project Task Force identified six areas to be reviewed:

- Organizational Structure
- Personnel
- Program Evaluation
- Automation
- Commissions
- Facilities

After selecting Deloitte & Touche, the Project Task Force requested that a preliminary review be conducted in order to ensure that the areas identified were the most pertinent, important, and critical to SSA. This also would ensure that the identified areas for review would be the most beneficial to SSA, given the Audit Team's limitation of time and resources.

We conducted a preliminary review from June 24, 1991 through July 29, 1991. During the five-week preliminary review period, we interviewed Task Force members, members of the Board of Supervisors, top County administrators, management, as well as some rank and file employees selected through a random process. We then analyzed the results of the interviews and the review of documents.

Recommendations on the final Scope of Work were made to the Project Task Force on July 29, 1991. We recommended the four following areas for a thorough review:

- Automation
- Aging and Adult Services Programs
- General Assistance (GA) and Related Programs
- Management

These were recommended because:

- A current county-wide study on commissions was already being conducted and to review them would be a duplication of effort
- Facilities, Personnel, and Organizational Structure were defined as elements to be reviewed under the broader category of Management



- Program Evaluation was to focus mainly on Aging and Adult Services and General Assistance (GA) and related services because they were fiscally and programmatically the most at risk

The Project Task Force accepted our recommendations and the new Scope of Work was adopted. From July 29, 1991 to early September, 1991, we followed the revised Scope of Work in conducting the performance audit.

PROCESS FOLLOWED

The Audit Team conducted at least 200 interviews throughout the County to ensure that a broad-based perspective was included in the review. These interviews included:

- Board of Supervisors
- Project Task Force Members
- County Management
- Agency Management
- Agency Rank and File
- Union Leadership
- Community Advocates
- Community Providers
- Agency Clients

A list of interviewees is included in Appendix B.

Documents were collected and reviewed to validate and verify findings whenever possible. A list of these documents appears in Appendix C.

The Audit Team also contacted County Social and Health Services agencies from other counties in order to identify comparability information regarding policies, procedures, practices, and delivery models. Included in this review were the Counties of:

- Los Angeles
- Monterey
- Sacramento
- San Diego
- San Francisco
- San Joaquin
- San Mateo
- Santa Clara

Scheduled status meetings were conducted with the Project Coordinator and the Project Task Force.



BROAD BASED ISSUES

During the course of conducting the performance audit, several major issues which currently or will shortly impact SSA were identified. These issues were determined to be of the magnitude that they (1) transcended SSA and were either County or State-wide issues or (2) were developing issues in which definitive information was not available.

Major issues which fit these categories include:

- Changing demographics
- Geography
- Changing roles and responsibilities

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

The changing demographics, of the State in general and the County of Alameda specifically, are forcing the local policy makers to address the issue of delivering services to a growing number of clients who do not adequately command the English language, but who require information, instructions, materials, and services in a multiple of distinct languages.

In order to provide services to this clientele, the public agencies must have personnel who speak the language and who also understand the values and nuances of the respective cultures.

The increasing numbers due to immigration and in-migration has resulted in a "shift" in the client profile within the County and therefore, among the population to be served by public entities. This "shift" requires that public entities:

- Hire, train, and supervise bilingual personnel in appropriate language groups
- Ensure that bilingual personnel understand the culture of the respective group being served
- Develop materials which are in languages other than English
- Develop community outreach programs directed toward educating and informing distinct nationalities about available services
- Include language and cultural differences as a major factor in all planning activities



- Establish staff development programs which ensure County personnel acquiring skill-sets to plan and provide services to clients whose language is other than English
- Ensure that the leadership of agencies reflect the community it serves

The changing face of the County requires a leadership which not only acknowledges the need for but embraces policies and practices which serve its changing community. Major efforts in this direction are needed in the Social Services Agency, and we believe that this would probably apply to other service agencies within the County.

GEOGRAPHY

Another area of demographics which impacts SSA and is also a part of a larger issue is the urban-centered population versus the rest of the County. The problem is geography.

In Alameda County, the geographic distribution of its population make many issues appear to be racially-driven.

This problem has been described by some as “fighting the War between the North and South again.” Another description could be merely the differences between the urban and suburban regions within the County.

This geography has created a division and a clear demarcation among the County’s population mostly based on differing socio-economic pockets.

The high concentration of a population in need of services in the Berkeley-Oakland area has strained relations among policy makers who represent other areas of the county.

Therefore, the Board, in order to ensure a broad base support for many difficult issues, must present to the greater community either the benefits derived, liabilities involved or the trade-offs in order to gain support and understanding.



CHANGING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Another major area which, although directed toward Social Services, is not fully addressed in this review because it is in its early development stages, is State Realignment of Social Services.

Legislative action to create a new role and responsibility for local decision makers regarding social services has been taken. Many operational issues regarding funding, reporting requirements, and administrative flexibility have not been fully developed or finalized at the time the Audit Team completed its fieldwork for the performance audit.

Realignment will impact the County by:

- Shifting policy making to local officials
- Placing pressure points of influence closer to the community
- Placing planning and accountability at the local level

This shift should be seen as an opportunity to re-evaluate, reassess, and possibly redesign how affected agencies conduct business.

Demographics, geography, and roles and responsibilities are but a few issues which will have substantial impact on public policy in the next decade. They will complicate the competition for resources among the different community interests and perceived community needs. All this translates to tough decision making choices for the Board of Supervisors.



SECTION II
OVERVIEW OF THE AGENCY

II. OVERVIEW OF AGENCY

FOCUS ON PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

Political social policies in our country are designed, developed, and executed according to the accepted political thought of the day. This thought most often reflects a philosophical position regarding the role and responsibility of government. Most often the determination of appropriateness of roles usually coincides with the economics of the times.

When economic times are prosperous, policies reflect:

- Creation of more programs
- Greater responsibilities for government
- Generous appropriations

When economic times are weak, policies reflect:

- Reduction in programs
- More requirements for receiving benefits or services
- More oversight
- Less appropriations

For over a decade the political direction has not only determined the role and responsibility of government, but has also determined which levels of government the roles and responsibilities should be placed. A transfer of roles and responsibilities from the federal level to the State level, and from the State level to the local level of government regarding many of the social service programs is occurring.

SSA administers a budget of more than \$400 million, oversees more than 1,500 employees, provides services through more than 37 distinct program categories, and serves individuals in at least 70,000 households within the County. The transfer of roles and responsibilities in an agency this size represents challenging times for the County of Alameda Social Service Agency.

CHANGING TIMES

The operating environment of SSA, has and will continue to be impacted by such major issues as:

- Limited fiscal resources
- Changing demographics
- Increasing needs for service
- Need for technology
- Need for additional services

In addition to adjusting to these factors, SSA must assist County decision makers fulfilling their new role and responsibilities regarding social policies through the AB948 Realignment process.

These demands cannot be met by SSA's current operational model.

The current operational model of SSA reflects established processes and procedures which may have been appropriate given previous circumstances. Current circumstances require SSA to adopt new approaches lest it becomes part of the problem and not the solution.

The changing environment will require innovative, creative, and diverse approaches to policy making, management, and service delivery. SSA must completely rethink and redesign how and why they conduct business. This process should not be directed by indictment or recrimination (this takes too much energy and has no positive results) but by a recognition that what was appropriate in the past is no longer appropriate, required, nor desired.

Recognition that the changing environment is an exciting opportunity and challenge to create and serve should be shared by everyone within SSA. This recognition should be embraced by policy makers and community leaders who must support the changes.

There are no perfect models for approaching the challenges facing SSA, there are only some approaches that are more appropriate than others. Many American businesses are facing similar challenges and are also redesigning their approaches to achieve quality products, performances, and personnel practices.

Breaking down old mind-sets, established practices, and processing procedures must be guided by those who are dedicated to serving the public, not by those interested in only maintaining the institution or by those who "decide only by the dollar"

As part of this performance audit, the service delivery system of several Counties were reviewed. Some have created approaches which may work for Alameda's Social Service Agency, but since the passage of AB948, the Realignment Bill, even their approaches may have to be redesigned. The current leadership should be bold,

brave, and brazen in taking the best ideas from other Counties, as well as Alameda's "impacted" groups and creating a new social service delivery system. **It is time to do business differently.**

PERCEPTIONS

One of the overriding issues with regards to SSA operations was the perceptions held by the distinct entities about each other's roles, responsibilities, and effectiveness. Unfortunately, the most prevalently held perceptions were critical in nature.

These critical perceptions, whether based on faith, fact, or fiction, greatly influence many individuals and groups within the County and determine how they interact, interface, or interfere with one another. These perceptions are real, must be recognized, and regardless if factual or not or positive or not, they must be addressed because people act based upon their perceptions.

An overview of some of the critical perceptions groups held about each other are identified in Exhibit II-1.

Perceptions are a key factor to understanding some of the issues facing SSA.

SSA "UNOFFICIAL CREDO"

One of the significant perceptions which greatly impact SSA is the overwhelming acceptance that SSA is *over-worked* and *underfunded*. This message was reflected by everyone including Board Members, community representatives, management, union representatives, employees, and even clients.

This theme, based on substantial reductions of fiscal allocations, has become the anthem of SSA and the "Unofficial Credo" it lives by. While there is no denying that SSA has experienced severe reductions in resources, these reductions have also created a reduction in thinking, developing, and planning. The acceptance of this "Unofficial Credo" as a way of life is so ingrained that it has become the reason or rationale used for the continued reduction of staff and services or the excuse given for doing nothing at all.



PERCEPTIONS

ABOUT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

- Social Services not a priority
- Policies are tied to patronage only
- Demographics threaten the existing lines and positions
- Philosophies are out of line with economics
- Realignment seen as a windfall
- Geographic differences biggest problem
- Avoid difficult decisions because of re-election

ABOUT THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

- Caught in the middle between Board policies and Agency operations
- Control agencies through oversight, budget, and approval processes
- Structurally off-the-hook for tough decisions
- Can Pick and choose which issue to become involved in
- Spokespersons for Agencies with federal and State entities

ABOUT THE AGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Operational mentality hasn't changed in twenty years
- Major goal is to maintain and increase bureaucracy
- Defer policy responsibilities to the State, Feds and Board
- Elitist model rules
- Use fear and intimidation as management approach
- Avoid communications, coordination, and participation of community

ABOUT THE AGENCY STAFF

- Accept their low status within the Community and treat clients accordingly
- Use overworked and understaffed as excuse
- Believe many clients not in need
- Lack knowledge of other programs within the agency
- Lack relationships with agencies outside the Agency

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Adversarial in nature
- Want clients to get anything and everything
- Create barriers

SSA leadership needs to break this beaten, defeated, psychological complex and turn this problem into an opportunity. There needs to be a vision of difference, there needs to be an approach based on change, there needs to be assurance that there is support, and above all there needs to be hope that there is a way out. That is what leadership is about.

A new “credo” to replace the current *modus operandi*, should reflect an environment dedicated to service, based on innovation, concession, acceptance, participation, and ownership.

SSA leadership must develop a vision of a service delivery system based on a mission or purpose statement dedicated to improving the lives of individuals through services designed to result in a self-sufficient citizenry. Officials of the County must interface and be bold with officials outside the County on these innovations. They must aggressively request concessions by appropriate entities to try different approaches. The participation in these efforts should include representations of all affected groups. This is the only manner in which to build ownership and responsibility.

If the existing “Unofficial Credo” of *overworked* and *underfunded* is not changed, SSA will continue to go from crisis to crisis, feel barraged by outside elements, and could lose sight of its purpose.

RELATIONSHIPS

Another area where perceptions impact SSA is that of Relationships.

Most community organizations attract members based on personal interests and professional associations. As with most communities, many of the same individuals belong to multiple associations thus, individuals get to know each other extremely well. In Alameda County the community groups not only know each other well but they sustain this relationship over an extensive period of time. This creates an informal personal system which cannot be ignored as a factor in the County’s decision making processes.

People who “know” people or who are in some way related to “some” people, or who worked closely with “certain” people are perceived to parlay that personal relationship into a position of influence. While that may

not necessarily be the case, the perception that it exists sets the stage for a practice that creates difficulties for the leadership throughout the County. The perception that a personal relationship criteria is used in decision making is carried on well beyond the leadership and the community, and into SSA workplace.

Personal relationships almost become part of the person's identity. For example, when a particular individual was mentioned in the course of this review the presenter of the information, be they policy maker, administrator, community leader, or employee would, in describing the particular individual, inevitably mention who that person was associated with, worked for, related to, worked with previously, etc. It seemed that everyone had a personal history which became a very important part of who they were, how qualified and effective they were, and what they were about. Everyone who was anyone was a "walking history book."

Many individuals have a long history either in the County or within SSA and this no doubt accounts for special relationships. As stated earlier, the degree to which personal relationships were perceived as an important criteria in the decision making process was found to be extremely high at all operational levels. For example, a common reference to the Personnel System was the *Personal System*.

This perception creates problems for an organization or community in that those who are not part of an *important* personal relationship may feel "out of the loop", may be resentful, feel discriminated against, or worst of all, may feel powerless. There are many powerless people within SSA.

AGENCY-WIDE ISSUES

In the conduct of this performance audit, we identified several issues which were broader than the areas included in the Scope of Work or which were issues that applied to SSA as a whole. These obviously include the previously identified perceptions about the SSA "Unofficial Credo" and Personal Relationships.

Other Agency-wide issues include:

- The lack of a vision of a service delivery system

- The lack of innovation and creative alternative approaches to the delivery of services
- The accepted Mission Statement which does not endorse much less commit SSA to improving the quality of life for the citizens of the County (the current Mission Statement represents its functionalities not its purpose)
- The general lack of coordination between programs within SSA
- The limited coordination between SSA programs and other Agencies, providers, and advocates

In order to respond to these Agency-wide issues, the current leadership must:

- Develop “the” vision
- Establish an Executive Management Team which complements its leader’s strengths
- Seriously consider restructuring how programs and services are provided
- Develop mechanisms to include participation in the redesign
- Create a network with community groups based on trust and respect
- Redefine the Mission of SSA based on a purpose and a promise

If the leadership of SSA would approach these needed activities, we believe they would result in:

- Improved credibility
- Increased morale
- Shared responsibility for meeting needs
- Development of pride in the workplace at all levels
- Hope that SSA as a whole can make a positive difference in people’s lives.

SUMMARY OF POSITIVE FINDINGS

While our findings clearly indicate that SSA is facing a new environment and must do business differently, it would be remiss not to recognize that SSA does in fact have many positive aspects to its operations. Some of the positive practices we found included:

- Some staff who developed informal mechanisms to serve clients well beyond their job responsibilities
- Some staff who, in spite of difficult workplace issues, still feel a commitment to serving others
- Some managers who inspire
- Some managers who have credibility within the community
- Some initial approaches to coordinating program delivery
- Selected attempts by the leadership to making SSA more responsive
- Major investments in improving the physical work environment

There are some people and processes within SSA that should give policy makers hope that with time, investment, and leadership, SSA could very well position itself, by the middle of this decade, to be a model provider of social services to the people of Alameda County.



SECTION III
GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND RELATED PROGRAMS

III. GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND RELATED PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

As part of the performance review of the Social Services Agency of Alameda County, Deloitte & Touche conducted a detailed assessment of the agency's General Assistance (GA) program. The specific objectives of the GA program performance audit included the following:

- To identify approaches to control program costs
- To achieve substantial caseload reduction without causing undesirable results
- To increase the quality of client service levels

To achieve these outcomes, Deloitte & Touche focused its review on three principal areas of program performance. These areas are GA program design, revenue maximization and management and operations.

The review of program design involved the following objectives:

- Assess effective program design and policies from the standpoint of GA client outcomes
- Compare program practices with philosophy and mission of stated program goals and objectives and stakeholder groups
- Identify program design options vis-a-vis target population, budget, and desired outcomes

The objectives of the revenue maximization area included the following:

- Review GA population eligibility for federal and state matched programs
- Assess the opportunity for increased GA administrative cost matching under federal and state programs
- Assess design approaches for identifying and recovering GA reimbursements



Lastly, the objectives of the management and operations review of the GA program included:

- Assess the effectiveness of current GA program operations
- Identify efficiencies applicable to the GA program
- Develop recommendations for improving the management and operational practices of the GA program within current budget constraints

The investigative approach used to evaluate the GA program involved both qualitative and quantitative information sources, including:

- Interviews with program management and staff, agency directors, and community-based stakeholders
- Reviews of selected GA program characteristics in other California counties
- Analysis of management information and documents related to the GA program
- Reviews of selected case files

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

California state law requires each county to provide assistance to indigent residents who are determined needy but who are ineligible for federal or state assistance programs. The Social Services Agency of Alameda County administers the GA program for Alameda County and has responsibility for developing the program's policies and procedures.

To be eligible for the Alameda County GA program, an applicant must be a resident of Alameda County, at least 18 years of age or a married minor, a citizen of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted to the United States as a permanent resident, and have financial and property assets below specified levels. Redetermination of client eligibility for GA is required annually.

The county provides cash and limited in-kind assistance (for example, transportation assistance) to GA recipients. However, unlike the federal and state cash assistance programs, GA is not a grant program. All GA recipients are required to reimburse the County for cash received



or obtain credit through participation in the workfare program.

Unless specifically exempted under County program rules, all GA clients are required to comply with the County's Employables Program. This program has two principal components - a job search program for Food Stamp eligible recipients and a workfare program for all others and Food Stamp eligible clients who failed to find employment. Workfare sites include public and non-profit agencies. A third Employables Program option called New Opportunities for Work (NOW) was established in December 1990. A voluntary job preparation and employment assistance pilot project, this Food Stamps funded program increases the case management role of program staff by substantially reducing caseload per worker from the current 600 to 800 range down to approximately 50 cases per worker.

The County can sanction GA recipients for non-compliance with work program requirements for thirty to sixty days, depending on the number of noncompliance incidences. GA recipients can appeal a proposed sanction by satisfying a short-term remedy requirement or through a formal hearing process.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Alameda County faces an immediate crisis in funding its GA program due to unprecedented caseload growth over the past four years - from 2,840 cases in 1987 to 10,197 cases in June 1991. While the current FY 91-92 budget appropriation is \$29 million, projected program costs may actually be as high as \$45 million or approximately 5% of the total county General Fund budget. At the same time, there is concern over the program's effectiveness in meeting client needs, promoting self-sufficiency and serving the general interests of Alameda County stakeholders. Consequently, a thorough and comprehensive performance audit of the GA program is both timely and essential.

Based on our program review, we believe the major factors which have led to the current crisis are:

- The current client population which must be served has far different characteristics and needs than what was contemplated within the existing GA program design. Although the majority of GA clients (72%) are classified as employable; in fact, many in this group have systemic and major barriers to employ-

ment such as substance abuse, lack of motivation and/or poor education which prevent them from obtaining or holding down jobs. Ineligible for federal and state programs, the County's GA Program has become a last means of support. Even with heavy investment and substantial effort, it is likely that many clients will remain long-term recipients.

- The Social Services Agency has not assumed (or, to some extent, not been allowed to assume) a leadership role in effectuating the necessary changes in the GA program to confront emerging issues. For example, SSA has had difficulty in adopting measures to control caseload growth.
- The County's GA program basically is a process compliance model which strives to contain caseload growth through non-participation by clients who do not wish to or who fail to meet program requirements, as opposed to a model which emphasizes successful mainstreaming of clients.
- A set of program liberalizations in recent years have occurred as a result of strong advocacy group pressures, legal challenges and a reactive Board of Supervisors and this has contributed to the County's significant caseload growth.
- The quality of client service, in contrast to private service organizations or even other public human service needs-based programs, remains poor. The process compliance model approach, lack of access to eligibility workers by clients and decreases in timeliness performance are the chief reasons for this.
- There is an absence of well-articulated program goals and objectives explicitly supported within the framework of a consensus-driven strategic plan which can carry the program forward over the next five years.
- The agency's ability to effectively face off against the increased workloads and service demands are constrained by current programmatic and operational policies and approaches (some of which are outside of the Agency's direct control) and a lack of automation.



- Despite continuing efforts, opportunities for shifting costs and caseload, e.g., to the Federal SSI caseload, have not been fully realized.

FINDINGS

The findings in this section are grouped by the three principal areas of investigation—Program Design, Revenue Maximization and Management and Operations. In combination, these areas cover most aspects of the GA program, as well as related parts of other social service programs to which GA clients would have access. It should be noted that, while this differentiation helps in understanding the context of current performance issues, it is common that issues and findings actually may affect all three areas of investigation.

PROGRAM DESIGN ISSUES

ISSUE #1

The County of Alameda's General Assistance program lacks a clear and consensus-driven philosophical framework to guide the overall program in response to the current situation and to help establish specific goals from which program performance can be measured.

Condition

The GA Ordinance and Regulations documents do not contain explicit language that describes the program's overall mission or goals from the standpoint of being able to indicate or suggest what outcomes are expected of the program. These documents do contain general policies and principles that govern the delivery of assistance to eligible clients. For example, the Ordinance states assistance is to be administered "promptly and humanely." (9-10.2) The Regulations add that the "assistance is to be so administered as to encourage self-respect and self-reliance." (9-1-0) However, there is no section that describes the program's principal purpose(s) to be served by assisting individuals and families who are not eligible for federal or state assistance programs. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate program performance where there are no explicit mission statement or goals for the GA program to measure against (which should, if developed, also be consistent with the Agency's mission and goals).



Cause

Although the County of Alameda is mandated by state statute to offer the GA program, the statute also allows considerable flexibility in how counties may design and implement such a program. The State of California's Welfare and Institutions Code 17000 et seq. merely requires California counties to establish and administer a 100% county-funded cash assistance program for needy individuals and families who are ineligible for state and federal assistance programs.

The current GA program design approach was developed thirty years ago when GA clients were perceived to be employable persons in need of short term assistance or severely disabled but ineligible for SSI. It was during this time, when program demand was considerably lower than today, that GA program strategies and procedures were developed and refined.

Effect

Since the GA Ordinance and Regulations focus on client processing and service delivery, it is no surprise that program management and staff also focus on these issues. Consequently, reports on General Assistance performance emphasize caseload workload and processing indicators such as cases per worker, overdue renewals, applications approved over 30 days, number sanctioned, et cetera.

ISSUE #2

There are some significant inconsistencies between the County of Alameda's General Assistance Ordinance and Regulations and how the GA program is currently administered.

Condition

The GA Ordinance and Regulations do spell out clear and relatively prescriptive program requirements and activities. However, some of these requirements and activities are not evident in the current program's operations.

For example, the requirement for all Employable cases to register with the Employment Development Division (EDD) largely is ignored. This requirement is common to many Counties and is considered a key element in connecting clients with the labor market. Past efforts to link the GA program with EDD resources have met with no success, although the smaller Hayward SSA and EDD offices have cooperated to assist GA clients to some extent. Unfortunately, while other Counties such as Los Angeles, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Sacramento and Fresno, while enforcing the registration requirement

and using it as an client eligibility condition, also report little, if any actual job placements result from the referrals. Clearly, more than merely imposing the requirement must be done from the standpoint of interagency coordination if the referral process will actually benefit clients.

Referral of medically diagnosed or self-identified drug addicts or alcoholics to approved treatment centers is another example of a relatively dormant program design element. GA Ordinance 9-28 contains an eligibility criteria element that stipulates all medically diagnosed drug and alcohol abusers applying for General Assistance must undergo treatment, if such treatment is determined by the Alameda County Health Care Services Agency (HCSA) to be available and appropriate. However, the majority of GA medically diagnosed or self-identified applicants are not being subjected to this evaluation. Some GA clients are being identified as alcohol and drug abusers and are referred to treatment centers. However, the current referral rate (5% of caseload is referred to treatment) is substantially lower than the percentage having this condition as estimated by program staff (33%). If staff estimates are correct, only 15% of the GA clients with substance abuse issues are referred to treatment centers.

GA staff have received informational training from the County Drug and Alcohol Department. This Department has also contributed staff resources to help identify homeless client alcohol and drug abuse. However, staff interviews suggest that many clients they suspect are abusers are not actually referred or refuse to go for medical diagnosis.

Finally, the Employables Program has no requirement or procedure in place for referring work program clients to HCSA or treatment centers. Severe abusers who are not able to participate in work program components have been exempted from the Employables Program.

Another example of a program requirement not being practiced is the cash reimbursement aspect of the GA program. GA cash assistance is a loan, not a grant. Every GA applicant must sign a form stating their understanding that GA cash assistance must be repaid either through workfare while enrolled in GA or with cash after having left the program. The County, however, is not actively recovering full loan repayments from clients.



Cause

The GA Ordinance is not reflected fully in current operations for at least two reasons. The Social Services Agency lacks sufficient resources to remove defunct or outdated sections of the GA Ordinance, although the agency has amended the GA Ordinance over time to reflect some liberalizations of the program. Secondly, GA program design and operations receive substantial scrutiny and review by entities external to the agency, which results in pressures to informally change program execution and ordinances are not always updated.

Effect

If ordinances and regulations do not accurately reflect the operational environment, then it becomes more difficult to establish a consensus around the strategies that should govern the program and the program can drift. The lack of an accurate ordinance weakens the agency's leadership capability and inhibits effective evaluation of possible program changes.

ISSUE #3

The current operational program design is dictated, to a large extent, by outside pressures rather than by rational decisions made by the Board of Supervisors in concert with program management and outside stakeholders.

Condition

Legal suits, out of court settlements and court decisions occurring in other California counties force the GA program into a reactive mode. Informal legal interpretations of these events tend to drive program changes and, at the same time, decrease program management's ability to administer effective processes. Changes to program regulations and procedures over the last six years have had significant impact on caseload levels and benefit costs. Most of these changes have not resulted from events occurring in Alameda County, but from interpretations of events happening in other counties. For example, although the County's current GA regulations describe a fairly streamlined approach to sanctioning clients for non-cooperation, program management has expanded the client's options to remedy a sanction referral in response to a legal challenge being contested in another county. This action has substantially increased the difficulty in administering sanctions. Coordination between the work program and the eligibility units has diminished, resulting in increased administrative processing time for program staff and more administrative hoops for clients to jump through.

Cause

The GA program and agency management have little control over these external pressures and, therefore, have not been able to exert leadership over program operations. Program issues are typically of narrow scope and focused on specific program policies rather than on broad program strategies. Also, agency efforts to analyze GA program have focused on caseload issues (principally, the reasons for the large recent increases in cases as in the February 1990 Report on the General Assistance Program) and not on overall program goals and objectives.

Effect

The unprecedented caseload growth has had major budgetary impacts, caused morale issues with program staff and increased the churning of clients through program processes, especially work program sanctioning and discontinuous actions - despite GA program management's continuous efforts to improve service delivery to clients.

ISSUE #4

The current GA program model, as described in the regulations or as practiced in the field, does not meet the service needs of the new client population.

Condition

The 1989 GA Client Profile Study, conducted by the Social Services Agency, provides evidence of how the GA population characteristics have changed over the previous 12 years. Of most interest from a program design perspective are the following changes:

- The Employability Class 1 (clients who claim no physical or mental disabilities which would prevent them from working) group grew from 8% of the GA caseload in 1977 to 72% in 1989.
- The number of clients stating they lived with others, as opposed to alone, shifted dramatically from 33% of the caseload in 1977 to 67% in 1989.
- The average length of time on GA (since the client's last application date) for the Employability Class 1 clients increased slightly from 7.5 months in 1977 to 8.1 months in 1989. (The statistical significance of this difference is unknown.) However, broad national research recently conducted within the AFDC program suggests a substantial percentage of clients may be in the midst of eight year stays on welfare. Given the high frequency of clients going on/off/on



the GA caseload, this statistic more than likely masks the true nature of the problem.

- The percent of caseload that is minority increased from 64% in 1977 to 88% in 1989.

These changes suggest that the typical case now in the GA program is "employable", living in a household with others, non-white and staying on GA at least as long as the typical employable GA client in prior years. The only program design change implemented in the last five years that directly serves employable clients is the NOW program. But this voluntary and much more expensive program (on a per case basis) is only serving a very small segment of the employables population (less than 5%).

Cause

Numerous programmatic changes that widen GA eligibility and improve access to GA benefits, the loss of affordable housing in Oakland, the lingering affects of the 1989 earthquake, and the increase of former criminal justice and mental health system clients into the general population are frequently cited as principal reasons for Alameda County's dramatic caseload growth. These factors also have contributed to the caseload growth in many California counties, although no County growth is as dramatic as Alameda County's, as indicated in Table 1 below where Alameda County's rate of growth in average number of monthly cases is compared to the four next fastest growing county caseloads (minimum 400 cases in 1986-87) and the state-wide average for the 1986-87 to 1990-91 time period:

TABLE 1

**Caseload Growth
1986-87 to 1990-91**

County	Rate of Growth
Alameda	192%
Contra Costa	86%
Orange	85%
San Diego	65%
Butte	54%
State-wide Average	44%



Effect

Until major changes are adopted to either restrict access to the GA program by applicants or to assist clients in leaving GA, caseload will likely remain high and possibly grow. This will place continuing pressure on SSA to meet the service demands and needs of an extremely large client base.

Other than the mandatory Aid in Kind assistance alternative adopted for homeless applicants in 1990 which reduced the number of homeless GA applicants, the numerous other GA program changes have instead contributed to caseload growth or benefit cost increases.

ISSUE #5

The current program design limits the ability of management and staff to achieve the goals and objectives of the Employables Program.

Condition

The Employables Program has three goals:

- To assist individuals to develop and/or maintain standard work habits and attitudes;
- To assist individuals to become job-ready;
- To assist job ready individuals to obtain unsubsidized employment. (Regulations, 9-2-4.1)

The Employables Program consists of three components:

- General Assistance Employment Program (GAEP), a workfare program for those not eligible or interested in the other two programs
- Food Stamps Employment & Training (FSET), an individual job search program for eight weeks and opportunity to attend a job preparation workshop
- New Opportunities for Work (NOW), a pilot project to provide case management services and enhanced job preparation to a voluntary group of principally FSET eligible clients

There are a substantial number of program design and management issues facing the Employables Program, including:

Caseload management crisis. Changes to sanctions policy, in particular, have caused Employables Program

staff to waste enormous time and resources in processing clients without achieving adequate results (for example, a high percentage of sanctions are rescinded). In addition to the liberal sanctioning process which gives clients several opportunities to remedy, other factors contribute to the high caseload. The rate of missed client appointments is high at all stages. GA clients who claimed to be employable at the GA application switch and claim to be disabled once referred to the Employables Program. Medical determinations at the public hospital may take several months. The actual sanctions rate has declined over the past several years.

Overcapacity. Under current program requirements and procedures, Employables Program staff cannot process the number of cases referred to them by the eligibility workers. Some employable clients who are referred to either GAEP or FSET are referred back for lack of space; and some of these cases are not referred again on a timely basis (the rates are unknown because the information is not systematically collected).

GAEP work-sites are not monitored. Until the new Employables Program came on board recently, sites were rarely visited and the number of sites were unknown (there is no dedicated work-site coordinator in the Employables Program). Voluntary work-site supervisors responsible for keeping client attendance and assigning client to tasks are not trained and there is frequent turnover of this position. Attendance reports (which are instrumental in documenting client compliance and whether cash loan is being worked off) are not 100% accurate, not all turned in, or routinely reviewed by program staff.

Program participation outcomes are unknown. Management reports indicate that less than 1% of the caseload gets employed (based on a review of reports for June of 1988, 1990 and 1991). However, FSET and GAEP employment outcomes are not effectively tracked according to staff. Coordination between work programs and alcohol and drug treatment programs are non-existent and come under two different monitoring systems. Employables Program staff are not documenting alcohol and drug abuse issues that can be used to refer clients for medical diagnosis or treatment.

Cause

Clients who are willing to accept the maximum GA cash payment of \$340 per month (the equivalent of 18 hours per week at minimum wage) likely have substantial barriers to employment that prevent many of them from obtaining and holding down even a minimum wage job. Once in the GA program, there are no effective program incentives for clients to achieve positive outcomes.

Jobs in the Alameda County area appear to be available, although many are at minimum wage or slightly above. Gross local economic indicators suggest that Alameda County's labor market demand is comparable to or in better shape than other California counties. The Alameda County unemployment rate steadily decreased during the 1980's to where it has recently been between 4 and 5%, which is slightly less than the California state-wide average and approximately half the high point of 8.6% reached in 1982. (However, it should be pointed out that unemployment figures do not represent those who have exhausted unemployment compensation or who are not actually seeking employment. Further, the unemployment rates are higher for people of color. Thus, the GA population may not be accurately reflected in the overall unemployment rate). Local inflation has also remained relatively low and stable during the past five years.

Effect

Unless program design changes are made, the Employables Program will continue to process and re-process clients and manage the caseload from a program compliance basis, as opposed to an employment approach which focuses on mainstreaming clients.

**PROGRAM DESIGN
CONCLUSIONS**

The County's GA program issues are unlikely to improve and may actually worsen in the near future for a variety of reasons. These include a deteriorating economic base, pervasive issues in the K-12 educational system, loss of affordable housing, prevalent substance abuse by the client population and an unwillingness by the Federal and State governments to provide financial or programmatic support. Therefore, solutions to the current budget crisis will have to be county and community-based. This will require the cooperation and active involvement of the entire County of Alameda stakeholder community in developing a radical new program design to meet the GA client needs.

A substantial percentage of the client population, with

its multiple barriers to self-sufficiency, do not have many plausible options to the GA program, and more than likely, will remain long-term recipients, unless strong and directed support services are provided. Yet the GA program only provides limited benefits for participants other than the small cash payment.¹

As a consequence, there is no short, readily available answer to solving the budget crisis facing the County of Alameda without adopting radical changes to the program design. Some of these solutions are likely to be not palatable to the Board of Supervisors, external stakeholder groups and subject to legal challenge, including, for example, time-limiting program participation, capping the GA total benefits budget, and/or adopting drastic rateable reductions. Therefore, it will be necessary for the County to take a long-term perspective on turning the GA program around while controlling, to the degree possible, caseload growth through initiatives such as the recent aid in kind vendor payment actions.

What is certain is that demands on County resources have sharply escalated and future changes to program design and strategies will likely have to be budget neutral. By any standard, the GA program's expenditures over the last five years have increased dramatically. This increase is directly the result of increasing caseload rather than increases in benefit levels or administrative costs. In fact, the amount of total benefits paid out has quadrupled over the last five years. Similarly, as a percentage of the County's total appropriation level, GA benefit costs have doubled. Given the current budgetary issues facing Alameda County, it must be presumed that any changes to the GA program design must not only be cost neutral but also promote actual short and long term reductions in program expenditures (in the aggregate, isolated incentives may cost additional resources). The challenge to the county, then, is

¹ It was not possible, within the scope of this audit to accurately determine what percentage of the GA caseload represents long-term clients with little likelihood of leaving assistance. Available data to answer this question is limited and the issue warrants a separate study in and of itself. However, the obvious controlling factors which influence this issue are the common ways GA clients now leave assistance. Four principal drivers of caseload exits exist: failing to meet specific on-going eligibility criteria such as filing a monthly report, pursuing SSI or participating in a work program; entering employment; establishing SSI eligibility or moving. An estimated 15% of the caseload leaves for eligibility reasons (ignoring rescissions), 1% due to employment and 10% due to eligibility for SSI. This would suggest that, in the absence of radical changes in program design or exogenous factors such as the economy, about 70 - 75% of the GA caseload in Alameda County represents potential long-term recipients under the current program design.

to improve the GA program in ways that do not require additional contributions from the General Fund. The principal task for the County is to leverage existing and potential benefit and administrative dollars to gain more support and direct services for the GA population and, more importantly, to shape the positive outcomes that will reduce the County's GA caseload. For example, projected benefit and administrative savings which could be gained from the SSI revenue maximization and Food Stamp administrative claiming initiatives could be redirected towards expansion of the GA employment program and related support services. In this manner, overall budget neutrality could be maintained. Furthermore, most of the revenue maximization initiatives discussed later in this report can be undertaken without substantial new resources required on the part of SSA. Both the SSI and overpayment/reimbursement collection efforts, for example, could be privatized initiatives with little or no up-front costs to the County.

PROGRAM DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1

The Social Services Agency must gain control of the GA program's administrative processes.

This may involve moving the employment and training program activities directly under the GA program and giving eligibility workers responsibility for work program referral, monitoring and sanctioning processes. If this action is taken, it must be tied to productivity improvements suggested in the Management and Operations section of this report. Also, the sanctioning process needs re-examination from the standpoint of streamlining how non-compliance can occur, the number of times in a month a non-compliance action is allowed, the length of the penalty, opportunities to remedy, etc.

Program strategies for handling non-cooperation with program rules should be fair, clear, and limited to selected core requirements governing the program. Providing multiple chances to "cure" and different sanctioning periods confuse clients and complicate worker tasks, consume resources and dilute the importance of client and staff commitment to program objectives. Instances in which sanctions or penalties should

be applied should be limited but strictly enforced. Incorporating such requirements into the eligibility process and developing positive incentives to motivate clients represent a far better conceptual model.

The medical diagnosis process also needs major change. The county public hospital should not be the principal source for obtaining medical determinations. One option might involve hiring trained medical personnel on staff; another option would involve contracting out to local community medical clinics which have proven qualifications to effectively assess employability. This assessment must be completed at the beginning of the eligibility determination process since it has significant bearing on client referral and program enrollment.

Recommendation #2

The Social Services Agency needs to take the lead in facilitating a strategic planning process to define an integrated, goals-oriented GA program to replace the current model.

Under a comprehensive strategic planning process, the stakeholder community (including the Board of Supervisors, the Social Services Agency, related human service agencies, the medical community, community-based service providers and advocates, the business community and clients) needs to develop a consensus-driven mission statement and related goals and objectives for the GA program and agreed-upon program design elements.

The following program *core elements* or principles should be strongly considered in any set of strategies developed to change the GA program. They are based on our experience and insights in completing this performance audit as well as from performing numerous program reviews and audits across a wide range of human service programs around the United States.

An eligibility determination process that fosters client commitment to program goals. All of the mandatory requirements that are central to the program's core values should be concentrated in the eligibility determination process. These requirements should be easily enforced and simple to understand from the client's viewpoint. For example, front end eligibility conditions for applicants might include mandatory medical reviews to determine employability and a mandatory seven day job search to screen out the most employable



applicants who would otherwise take resources from other potential clients with much greater employment barriers and needs for services. Once past the eligibility screen, then the program should become services oriented and promote successful client outcomes.

A comparison of selected other counties indicates that it is a relatively common approach to establish such eligibility requirements. For example, Sacramento, Santa Clara and Fresno require registration with EDD as an eligibility requirement. Sacramento, Santa Clara, San Mateo and Fresno require a medical statement as a front-end condition for applicants. San Mateo and Fresno both have requirements for applicants to perform work activities.

Program services focused on clients who will benefit. The GA population contains a diverse population that can be differentiated into more groups than is permitted by the current employability classifications. This suggests that the GA program should develop client profiles which can identify those who will more likely gain from a particular set of program treatments. For example, what should be offered to the most employable group who would likely remain on GA for a short period without any intervention? What should be offered to the much larger group who exhibit a certain mix of employment barriers, age and health characteristics, and motivation? National research by MDRC on employment and training indicates that the most consistent and largest program impacts are made with the moderately disadvantaged client groups.

Incentive-based program components which motivate providers and clients to work together and toward successful outcomes. Examples of possible program incentives are described under the next recommendation (p. 16).

Clearly articulated program participation paths which encourage client responsibility. After the eligibility determination process, incentive-based options should be made available to clients that allow them to choose which program path they want to follow. The following program model is an example of how this principle

might be implemented:

- After eligibility is determined, all employable clients are referred to a time-limited work-orientation program such as the 415 Society program approach. (This assumes applicants completed a short job search requirement unsuccessfully.)
- While in this component, clients could voluntarily graduate into a time-limited transitional work program, where the GA cash grant is converted into an hourly wage (to mirror the employment world.) If clients do not show up without good cause, they do not receive their hourly wages for the time missed. If participation is only part-time, the monthly wage could total less than the standard GA cash grant, but if the client attends full-time, the wages could total more than the standard GA grant amount.
- After participating in the transitional work program, the GA client would be referred to a job development job search component. If unsuccessful, the GA client would be referred back to the 415 Society program equivalent and start the cycle over.

Other program components and essential services (formal vocational training, alcohol and drug abuse counseling, etc.) would have to be linked to this program model.

Recommendation #3

A newly reconstructed GA program should include incentives for moving clients into positive outcomes.

The stakeholder group needs to identify program incentives (both agency and community-based) to incorporate into the program design. Currently, a significant amount of GA program resources are spent on processing clients on and off GA due to failure to meet or comply with work program requirements. As is commonly found in other mandatory programs around the country, a number of clients will find ways to avoid participation no matter how tight and restrictive the program requirements. In addition, the tightening of rules and regulations to force client behavior against their will requires substantially more monitoring and processing resources and little evidence that program savings exceed the additional administrative costs. The county will only gain cooperative client participation which can result in positive caseload reduction if partic-

ipants become convinced the program service will materially benefit them. However, these enhanced program services should be available for those who volunteer after fulfilling mandatory requirements, for example, after a time-limited workfare assignment or after satisfying eligibility requirements.

The current GA program operating framework involves substantial administrative hurdles with limited assistance or incentives to clients to become self-sufficient. As an indication of this current emphasis, GA program management does not know how many cases are actually leaving the program successfully (i.e. through employment) rather than resurfacing in another part of the county's human services system or returning to GA. Arbitrary reductions in caseload through process requirements most likely push those clients into other parts of the County's social, health, and public safety systems which, paradoxically, also require County resources.

An effective program design would incorporate incentives to move clients into successful outcomes within a framework of selected participation requirements which must be met by all clients and program services which encourage clients to seek self-sufficiency. Enhanced services or benefits (examples could include forgiveness of GA loan, earned income disregard, additional cash subsidy, increased or different mix of in-kind benefit) could then be offered to clients who volunteer to participate in employment-related activities, take part in alcohol or drug abuse treatment programs, et cetera. It may also require the setting aside of a portion of the GA budget for priority services (contracted or directly provided) such as substance and alcohol abuse treatment interventions. A positive incentive based program design will more likely achieve reduced reliance on County resources as clients move out of the program with positive results.

Recommendation #4

The Social Services Agency must develop and nurture closer ties to other resources in the community, including JTPA, EDD, Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling, et cetera.

It is imperative that an effective social service program design consider and embrace community-based re

sources for the following essential reasons:

- To provide human services to GA clients and applicants which would not be efficiently delivered through the public cash assistance program;
- To find dedicated resources for GA clients in an already mature service delivery system; and
- To foster ownership of the GA program's strategies by groups and organizations that could hinder program progress.

Recommendation #5

The GA program needs to obtain effective legal counseling.

The Social Services Agency needs access to its own legal counsel which can advise the agency and the Board of Supervisor and advocate for program policies and decisions. This could involve the hiring of a dedicated legal counsel in the agency, who would coordinate with the County's General Counsel, or the outsourcing of a General Counsel legal advisor to the agency. Alternatively, the agency could contract for specialized legal counsel in the community.

FINDINGS

This section of the General Assistance program performance audit covers Revenue Maximization issues and opportunities.

REVENUE MAXIMIZATION ISSUES

ISSUE #6

Alameda County could save additional millions of dollars through establishing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) eligibility for more GA clients.

Condition

SSI is a 100% federally financed cash assistance program for needy, aged, blind or disabled individuals which pays a monthly benefit of \$630 per month. GA clients typically establish eligibility for SSI by meeting stringent disability criteria which basically require the applicant's condition to be totally disabling and last 12 months or result in his/her death.

Major opportunities exist for increasing the number of

GA clients who become SSI or Medi-Cal eligible through improving current processes at the following stages:

- Increasing the number of GA clients who are initially referred for SSI eligibility determinations
- Providing stronger support and assistance to clients in pursuing their claims, and
- Increasing DSS resources available to assist denied clients in processing their appeals.

Each of these will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of this section.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Under current SSA operating procedures, GA clients are typically not referred for SSI or Medi-Cal eligibility unless the client states they are severely disabled or, in the judgment of the worker, he/she is obviously impaired. Workers have received little, if any, formal training in relevant SSI or Medi-Cal rules and procedures.

SSA recently formed a specialized unit to handle all Class III unemployable clients. One of this unit's primary roles is to get Class III GA clients approved for SSI. However, minimal, if any actual hands-on assistance to clients is provided. Class III clients are those who are considered physically unable to perform any type of work (16% of all GA clients). In contrast, Class II clients (8% of the caseload) are considered employable with physical restrictions.

However, a special study recently performed by SSA indicated that 84% of the ongoing Class III's and 72% of the Class II's had high potential for SSI approval, but none had formally applied for SSI. This suggests that a high percentage of the Class II and Class III GA caseload (24% of the total caseload) has never been referred to SSI, but could be potentially eligible.

Based on our own review of the July/August 1991 automated match between SSI applications pending and the GA caseload, it appears that about 18-20% of Alameda's new GA approvals are now referred to SSI. This rate of referral is also approximately confirmed by the number of SSI decisions in the past year (2151) versus the total number of GA approvals (10411) or 20.6%. This contrasts to a 25% referral rate in San Mateo and

33% in Sacramento. Consequently, despite making improvements, it appears both more of the existing caseload and new approvals could be referred to SSI for eligibility determinations. Part of the explanation may also lie with the employability classification process used by the different Counties. It does not seem plausible, at face value, that Alameda County, for example, would have a GA client group where only 18% are unemployable whereas Sacramento County's GA population is 66% unemployable. This difference could result from variations in the criteria employed or the percentage referred for the medical diagnoses. Informal discussions with staff indicate that, in their view, a substantial number of the clients classified as Class 1 employables actually have major physical or mental barriers. Although the question remains unanswered what percentage of these clients would qualify for SSI; without such referrals, the County will never realize any cost avoidance potential, to the extent it exists.

ASSISTANCE TO GA CLIENTS IN PURSUING THEIR APPLICATIONS

41% of all GA SSI denials in Alameda County result from the applicant's failure, refusal or inability to provide sufficient information to complete the application. Interestingly, 41% of all SSI referrals result in approvals, thereby suggesting that, if all claims were pursued to completion, the approval rate would increase to 57%. Assuming the same total number of decision notices received by Alameda County for the 12 months ending August 1991 (2151), this would represent an additional 345 approved cases, if the approval rate for applications which are pursued to completion were maintained.

ASSISTING CLIENTS IN APPEALING THEIR DENIALS

For the past 10 years, SSA has employed an in-house SSI advocate to assist GA clients in pursuing SSI appeals. In addition, all GA clients are required to file SSI appeals or they are discontinued. (An estimated 86 cases have been discontinued over the past 10 years.)

For the 12 months ending 6/91, the SSI advocate received a total of 310 referrals or about 24% of all SSI denials. However, she actually performed direct advocacy on a far smaller number of the referrals - in fact, she was directly involved in only 18 cases where SSI eligibility was established on appeal. Her efforts resulted in estimated savings of \$92,000. In addition, outside attorneys representing GA clients successfully appealed an additional 21 cases involving another \$90,000 in reim-

bursements to the county.

From the above data, it is clear that a small percentage of SSI denials (24%) are actually referred to the SSI advocate and of these, a small percentage (12%) actually receive direct advocacy support from the in-house function or from outside attorneys. The in-house SSI advocate stated she had only lost 5-6 cases over the ten-year period she has been performing the function. However, the number of cases she has directly advocated for has decreased from a high of 37 cases in 1985 to 18 for the past year.

Separately, the number of cases represented by outside attorneys has also decreased from a high of 78 cases in 1983 to 21 cases last year. As a result, total dollars collected by the county directly attributable to assisting GA clients (through the SSI advocate for attorneys) on appeals have dropped from a high of \$348,000 in 1983 to \$183,000 last year.

In conclusion, the number of GA clients actually assisted in pursuing their SSI appeals and the total dollars collected by Alameda County as a result of these efforts are almost half of what was achieved in 1983.

Cause

There are four principal reasons Alameda County and DSS are not maximizing the shifting of GA costs to the SSI program to the extent possible:

1. Current intake processes are not tailored to promoting and supporting SSI eligibility for GA clients. Eligibility workers are not sufficiently trained in SSI eligibility criteria. Based on worker interviews, only clients with documented extreme physical impairments are typically referred.
2. GA clients are not always able to provide the necessary information for SSI and Medi-Cal approval or to carry out the required application procedures due to financial, cultural, or administrative barriers. Many are physically and/or mentally incapable of fulfilling their obligations without assistance.
3. The in-house advocate position cannot cope with the current referral workload which, in itself, is a fraction of the total denial volume. In contrast, Sacramento County has 4 social workers assigned to assist GA clients in pursuing their SSI appeals. San



Mateo uses 2 social workers to help clients apply for and appeal their SSI claims.

4. Alameda County decided several years ago to not permit attorneys to be directly reimbursed out of the initial SSI reimbursement payment. As a result, interest by attorneys in representing GA clients has waned (unlike Title II disability where attorneys are very active because the retroactive check is sent to them for distribution).

Conclusions

Alameda County could save millions of dollars in GA costs by more aggressively pursuing SSI eligibility for GA clients by:

- Referring a higher percentage of GA clients for SSI eligibility decisions.
- Providing direct assistance in pursuing their applications
- Providing greater support to GA clients in pursuing their appeals

If Alameda County implemented the following actions, significant savings could be realized. These actions include:

- Refer approximately 35% of its new approvals, based on an objective, criteria - driven, front end assessment;
- Refer all GA clients who have been on the caseload for two years or more;
- Enable those currently being denied for failure to pursue to be approved at the same rate as those who successfully complete their applications, and
- Assist 25% of those denied in getting approved on appeal.

The potential savings to the County would be \$10 million (1,592 new cases eligible for SSI x \$2,614 average interim SSI reimbursement + \$3,768 average avoidance of 1 year of GA eligibility). One year of GA cost avoidance is assumed for several reasons. Although the average stay on GA is apparently only 8.1 months for Class 1 employable cases, we believe the churning of the

caseload through the on-off on again cycle masks the true length of spell on welfare by GA clients. A similar phenomenon exists in the AFDC program which has been thoroughly documented by Bain and Ellwood at Harvard University. While the average stay on AFDC is about 18-24 months, the typical client is in the midst of an 8 year welfare spell interrupted by brief absences. Moreover, clients who establish SSI eligibility are likely to be longer-term than the employable population. Nevertheless, we believe the above assumptions, despite their apparent reasonableness, should probably be viewed as long-term performance goals as opposed to immediately realizable savings. The calculation merely serves to demonstrate the magnitude of the potential savings to the County.

In addition, these long-term GA clients who successfully obtain SSI eligibility qualify for almost double the monthly cash assistance provided by the GA program.

In our opinion, putting in place the necessary processes to aggressively achieve SSI eligibility for the maximum number of GA clients is the foremost opportunity for achieving long-term savings and caseload reduction for Alameda County.

ISSUE #7

The GA Program is not effectively collecting reimbursements for its GA program expenditures.

Condition

Reimbursements for GA come from three principal sources:

- Repayment by clients of overpayments they have received
- Repayments by clients of their GA assistance based on the ordinance that GA is a loan
- Retroactive interim assistance reimbursements from the SSI program

Alameda County collects a smaller share of its total GA program expenditures from the above sources (repayments by clients based on grant reductions are not included) than selected other counties. Please refer to Table 2 on the next page:

TABLE 2

County	Percent of GA Expenditures Reimbursed
Sacramento	23%
Fresno	21%
Santa Clara	12%
San Mateo	12%
Los Angeles	10%
Alameda	6%

Cause

To some degree, the performance of Alameda County is driven by the amount of SSI interim reimbursements it receives. This issue has been discussed earlier and the automated system for SSI IAR collection, which was recently implemented, should enable the Alameda GA Program to collect more IAR than it has in the past. For example, in comparison, Sacramento County collects about \$3 million in IAR, or about 50% more than Alameda County. Los Angeles County collects about \$20 million.

While overpayments, to the extent they are identified, for current GA clients, are recovered through temporary grant reductions, in Alameda County, reimbursements are rarely obtained from former clients or client attorneys (to the extent they are retained by clients to represent them vis-a-vis the County or independently on litigation issues and settlement funds are available). Central Collections has this responsibility at the present time. However, virtually no collections effort has been made since April 1990. At that time, Alameda County stopped its GA reimbursements effort from former clients based on the advice of County Counsel in response to pressures from advocacy groups. Therefore, SSI interim assistance reimbursements represent virtually all the monies collected by Alameda County presently (\$2 million per year). In Los Angeles, the effort is not much better where about \$450,000 in GR overpayments was collected in FY 1990/91.



It has also been questioned whether it is cost effective to collect from the former GA client population. Central Collections is interested in a pilot project to assess the relative cost effectiveness but believes without the required funding or staff, such a project cannot be initiated. In July 1989, a GA reimbursement collection pilot program collected \$36,000 before it was discontinued twelve months later. Although it is highly unlikely this effort was actually cost-effective, our work in accounts receivable management for the AFDC and Food Stamp programs across several states suggests that careful attention to prioritizing effort combined with intensive use of automated clearinghouse information can result in a cost-effective collections operation. While there may be some differences between the respective populations, a revamped pilot project may be worthwhile.

Effect

The GA reimbursement collection potential is difficult to estimate. The July 1991 GA Reimbursement Summary Report suggests that the Alameda County GA Program had a total potential reimbursement pool of approximately \$2 million resulting from discontinuances processed in April 1991. This would equate to \$24 million in uncollected reimbursements annually. The percentage of this \$24 million which is collectable from the GA population is likely to be very small and time-consuming but a targeted prioritized collection effort could still be cost-effective. If it is assumed that Alameda County collected the same percentage of GA program expenditures as the comparison counties, the potential opportunity ranges from \$600,000 to \$5 million. However, because it is not possible to isolate specific collection amounts from each of the three reimbursement sources for the comparison counties, this estimate may include disparities between Alameda and the other counties in the amount of SSI interim reimbursements. The opportunity for Alameda to increase its SSI interim reimbursements is already included in the earlier estimate on SSI revenue maximization.

Conclusion

Under current ordinance, the Alameda County GA Program should be fully reimbursed by former clients for all GA benefits they received. The County currently has no general GA reimbursement collection program in operation and may be forgoing significant potential collections. With respect to staffing and resources which would be required to initiate a pilot collection program, this would depend on whether the County used internal staff or contracted out the operation to a private collec-

tion agency. For comparison purposes, Sacramento County collected about \$700,000 in overpayments from former clients last year. The decision whether to contract out or to use internal collections staff depends on several factors. These include whether staffing resources presently exist or new staff must be hired; internal automated system capability versus what is commonly available in the private sector; the value of a contractually executed contingency fee arrangement (with no downside investment by the County) versus having total control, the extent of real interest by the private sector in pursuing the opportunity, etc. It may be the most practical for the County to pursue both opportunities simultaneously and then to compare results.

ISSUE #8

The GA Program is potentially performing activities which are not Food Stamps related and possibly could be eliminated thus increasing the opportunity to claim additional Food Stamp FFP for the NOW program

Condition

About 80% of the GA clients are also Food Stamp recipients. The GA Program is reimbursed by the Federal and State governments for administrative costs incurred in performing Food Stamp related activities. The Federal government reimburses 50% of costs claimed and the State of California reimburses 35% of the balance.

However, the specific amount of time spent by workers on individual non-Food stamp related activities is not known. Even the total amount of time spent on Food Stamp activities may be somewhat in question. Discussions with 10 GA workers indicate that their perception is that only about 15% of their time is directly spent on Food Stamp activities. However, the GA Program time studies indicate that between 40% and 50% of Program costs are Food Stamp related.

The administrative costs for activities which are not Food Stamp related are borne entirely by the County. The County is already claiming the maximum amount of Federal matching for Food stamp administrative costs based on the per case ceiling now in effect.

Separately, the County has not been able to substantially expand the NOW employment and training program because there is no additional County money to use for purposes of matching the Food Stamp FFP.

Based on informal professional estimates, District workers stated that the bulk of their time is spent on activities such as filing material in casefiles (22%), client interviews (20%) and compliance related discontinuance actions (19%).

Intake workers stated the majority of their time was spent on filing (24%), client interviews (20%), case transferring and control (12%) and compliance related activities (8%).

Cause

The GA Program time studies do not break down activities into specifics beyond the program level (AFDC, Food Stamp, etc.) It is, therefore, difficult to determine what specific activities are Food Stamp related and how much time workers spend on each of these activities versus non-Food Stamp activities and how much time workers spend on each of those.

Effect

The lack of detailed time and activity data makes it difficult to accurately identify administrative costs associated with specific activities and to measure the share of costs which are due specifically to Food Stamp related activities.

In addition, a substantial amount of worker time appears to be spent, based on their estimates, on activities which are process - driven. In other words, changes in SSA requirements or procedures could substantially influence the amount of time spent by workers on specific activities. As an example, if consideration were given to eliminating the filing of Case Data printouts, monthly reports (assuming the necessary State/federal waivers could be obtained), duplicate applications, etc., substantial worker time would be freed up for other tasks and activities. When asked how much of the documentation which was filed was unessential for adequate case maintenance, Intake worker said a minimum of 50% and District workers said as much as 75%. Similar results could be obtained by reexamining the discontinuance processes currently employed and moving to the program design approach discussed earlier.

Conclusion

An opportunity exists for SSA to potentially reduce the amount of overall case related administrative costs it currently incurs and specifically, to increase the County discretionary dollars available to match Food Stamp funding for the NOW program. For example, if 10% of current worker time could be eliminated from specific



activities, this would represent about \$450,000 (or 7-8 FTE's at \$60,000 per year including salary and all indirect costs) in additional County funds available for Federal matching for the NOW program.

REVENUE MAXIMIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #6

The employability classification system and employability statement process should be redesigned so that its primary focus is to assist in determining potential SSI eligibility.

All clients who allege substantial physical or mental problems, have substance abuse issues and/or have received recent medical care for a chronic condition should receive a front-end medical examination which is focused on whether the client could potentially meet the SSI disability criteria.

Rather than classifying clients by physical impairment, the GA Program should classify clients by ability to become employed. For example, the following categories might be used:

Class I Fully employable, no barriers to becoming employed, recent work history

Class II Some barriers to becoming employed (i.e. illiteracy, severe substance abuse, physical or mental impairment)

Class III Unemployable (i.e., severe long term physical or mental impairment)

All clients who are classified as Class II or Class III should be referred to SSI for an eligibility determination. Both the requirement to complete the medical determination and, for clients classified as Class II or III, filing for SSI could be established as eligibility conditions prior to receiving GA.

Recommendation #7

SSA should contract with community health centers or other local service providers to perform the medical assessments in a timely, focused and efficient manner.

This will be especially important if the county shifts the medical assessment to a front end eligibility condition. The current approach which uses the County Public Health System is unacceptable, given its poor and uneven quality, long delays and cost.

Recommendation #8

SSA should substantially increase the resources it applies in assisting GA clients to pursue the initial SSI eligibility.

This can be considered either through in-house expansion of the role and responsibilities of all units or SSA can consider outsourcing this responsibility to community advocacy groups on a performance basis. Under this concept any GA client requiring assistance in pursuing their SSI applications should be supported. This could include obtaining medical or other evidence, assisting in completing the application, making certain they appear for scheduled exams, etc. This effort should be combined with an aggressive discontinuance policy if the client fails to complete the application in spite of the assistance provided.

Recommendation #9

SSA should expand its efforts to advocate for GA clients initially denied SSI.

This can be done by either increasing its in-house advocacy staff so that a reasonable percentage of GA clients can receive assistance in pursuing their SSI appeals or, as a preferred alternative, SSA should consider outsourcing this work to community based organizations on a performance basis (a flat fee for every successful SSI appeal).

Recommendation #10

The County should initiate a pilot GA reimbursement collection program.

Although it is possible to conduct the pilot using internal staff, our recommendation is to explore first private collection agencies through an RFP process. There would be several advantages in doing this. Their staff are already trained, the appropriate automated system capability already exists and they can be funded on a performance based contract thereby avoiding any front-end costs or on-going investment by the County. Under either option, it will be important to prioritize the receivables based on factors such as the age and the amount of the claim, ability to find the former client, related Food Stamp overpayment, fraud, etc.

Recommendation #11

The GA Program should redesign the time studies.

To more accurately track time and activities at a more detailed activity level based on a one-time special study. This study should identify which specific staff activities are required and/or support the Food Stamp program. A careful review of all non-Food Stamp activities should then be performed with the objective of eliminating any activities which are unessential. An example of the level of detail necessary would be to document both the transaction type (eg. application, redetermination) and the activity performed (filing, telephone contact, data input, etc.)

FINDINGS

This section of the General Assistance program performance audit covers Management and Operations Issues and opportunities.

**MANAGEMENT AND
OPERATIONS ISSUES**
ISSUE #9

GA Program eligibility workers are not as productive as they could be due to the negotiated caseload standards.

Condition

Eligibility workers in both Intake and District could potentially handle higher caseloads. The current caseloads for eligibility workers are negotiated with the unions. Intake currently has a caseload standard of 31/month and District has a caseload standard of 156 per month.

We spoke in a structured focus session with 5 District workers who indicated that they could increase their caseloads over the budgeted standard without any changes in role or responsibilities. Three District workers stated they could handle up to 200 cases and two stated up to 250 cases. All felt even higher caseloads would be possible with improved automation. In a similar session with 5 Intake workers we interviewed, two felt they could not manage any increase in their assigned caseloads while the other three felt caseloads could be increased by 5-10 cases per month without any changes in responsibilities. Moreover, if a range of filing and paperwork reductions were accomplished, most workers indicated they thought they could substantially increase their caseloads even further. Admittedly, these profes-



sional estimates from a small sample of workers do not represent rigorous findings. However, they do raise serious questions which deserve further review.

Alameda GA worker caseload standards are generally lower than the other California GA Programs we surveyed. Below in Table 3 are the estimated monthly caseloads for the other California Counties:

TABLE 3		
County	Intake	Ongoing
Sacramento	63/mo	190/mo
Fresno	65/mo	195/mo
Santa Clara	60/mo	155/mo
San Mateo*	45/mo	200/mo
Alameda	31/mo	156/mo

*San Mateo County eligibility workers handle both intake and ongoing for GA and Food Stamps with a caseload of 160/month. Caseloads shown reflect the standards established if a worker were to have only GA intake or GA ongoing cases.)

Recently, Alameda County negotiated with the unions to increase caseloads on a voluntary basis for some workers who, in turn, receive a pay increase. However, in exchange for these higher caseloads and pay increases, 7 vacant positions for the GA program were diverted to fund the incentive program.

Cause

The caseload standards in Alameda County are negotiated with the unions. GA workers are unable to adjust their caseloads to the level which meets their experience and competence levels.

No thorough review has been recently undertaken to identify how workers spend their time and what changes could be made to improve their productivity.

Effect

A major effect of the caseload per worker restriction is that more than 3000 cases which are not assigned to eligibility workers and are sitting at the transfer desk. If these cases were actually assigned to workers, Alameda County workers would have much higher caseloads than in the other counties.



Conclusion

Caseloads per worker could be improved if unnecessary paperwork and related filing time were reduced in conjunction with the earlier recommendation and the budgeted caseload standards negotiated with the unions were lifted. Furthermore, the inefficiencies and errors created by the enormous number of unassigned transfer cases should receive immediate attention. The actual net result of corrective actions might be to both increase the caseloads per worker and the number of workers.

ISSUE #10

The GA Program's specialized approach to process and staffing creates redundancies, staff inefficiencies, and possibly reduced client service.

Condition

Although GA is a straight-forward assistance program and not nearly as complex as the Federally Matched AFDC and Food Stamp program, it has nevertheless developed into a very specialized program in Alameda County from the standpoint of worker roles and responsibilities, caseload, and client access points.

To illustrate, Table 4 identifies the GA Program process flow which contains the following:

TABLE 4

Step	Responsibility
Waiting Room	Receptionist
Screening Interview	Screener (Intake ET)
Group Meeting	Group Leader
Intake	Intake ET, Intake Supervisor
Transfer Desk	Transfer Desk ET, Transfer Desk Supervisor
District (On-going)	District ET, District Supervisor

This degree of functional specialization may create administrative barriers for clients in getting approved for GA. A GA applicant can see at least 3 GA employees on three different days before even being assigned to an Intake worker.

The GA Program has also specialized case management by type of client as indicated Table 5 on the following page.

TABLE 5

Client Type	Worker(s)
Regular Unit	Regular ET
Refugee Unit	Refugee ET
Homeless Unit	Homeless ET
Class III Unit	Class III ET
(Unemployables)	
Medi-Cal	Medi-Cal Specialist
SSI Appeals	Appeals Advocate
Work Program	GAEP worker, FSET worker

While some specialization typically occurs in cash assistance programs, it is not always the case. For example, in San Mateo County, GA eligibility workers handle both intake and ongoing cases and there are no specialized workers. Clients are referred to a worker by the receptionist. In Sacramento County, the intake process involves a receptionist, an orientation video and a screener before referral to the intake worker. Staff are specialized for the employable clients, SSI referrals, aid-in-kind and special skills cases. No specialized staff exist in Santa Clara and the intake process is limited to a receptionist, vocational services and the eligibility worker.

Some of Alameda County GA workers who are specialized believe that only a small percentage (10%) of their time was actually spent on specialized activities and many of those specialized activities were not mandated by Food Stamp requirements. While most workers believed some specialization is required to provide effective client service, most agreed that the GA Program may be over-specialized.

Cause

The GA Program process flow appears to have evolved over time in reaction to the significant growth of the total GA caseload and the need to break loose from general workers specific activities that were not performed well.

Effect

Over specialization of GA Program activities results in inefficient use of scarce resources and duplication of effort. Clients become confused as to who their worker is

and have difficulty obtaining access. Staff scheduling becomes problematic. Workers do not become knowledgeable about their cases, outside of their narrowly defined responsibilities.

The specialization may also create administrative barriers which make it difficult for applicants to get approved. The drop-out rate for Group Meetings, for example, is approximately 30%. While it may be argued that the many steps and people involved in the GA process serve to stem caseload growth by creating administrative barriers, many clients who drop out simply return later. This forces the GA Program to expend resources on rework and reapplication.

Conclusion

There are opportunities for increased worker productivity and client service by consolidating process steps and staff responsibilities.

MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #12

SSA should reassess the caseload standards.

The time study recommendation discussed above in combination with the recommended changes related to the specialization issue which follows should result in an opportunity to improve worker caseload capacity substantially. These improvements would be over and above the additional workload which workers now believe they can now carry. SSA should then, armed with data and factual analysis, renegotiate the caseload standards with the union to a more appropriate level. It is recommended, in fact, that the union be invited in to participate throughout the reassessment so that they become an integral part of the analysis. Finally, after completing the renegotiated standards, SSA will be in a far more supportable position to request appropriate staffing levels from the Board of supervisors and the County.

Recommendation #13

Worker Specializations should be reconsidered.

SSA should undertake a detailed review of all its specialized workers with the objective of making them generalists unless there are clear and convincing reasons

which support specialization. In particular, SSA should give consideration to eliminating the Group Meetings and the Transfer Desk functions within the intake process and to eliminating the following specialized work units: Homeless, Work Program and Medi-Cal.



SECTION IV
AGING AND ADULT SERVICES PROGRAMS

IV. AGING AND ADULT SERVICES PROGRAMS

INTRODUCTION

Alameda County's interest and request for a review of the Aging and Adult Services area was a most timely and appropriate decision. County Governments are faced with challenges and opportunities to evaluate the needs and services to their communities. The changing environment, the change in demographics, as well as the changes in State-County sharing ratios brought about by AB948 the Realignment Bill, allows County Government to set new priorities in meeting these changing times. AB948, permits counties to apply for regulatory waivers for social service programs. Alameda County's growth in the senior population reflects a challenging mix. The County ranks third in the State for minority elders, it ranks sixth in numbers over age 60 and seventh in low income seniors. Using these facts we have endeavored to analyze and identify opportunities for SSA and more importantly to offer recommendations on how to design a more effective and efficient delivery system.

We interviewed management, rank and file staff, the directors of the departments, community-based organizations, senior advocates, and the Steering Committee of the Commission on Aging. We also visited and reviewed Aging and Adult Services agencies in other counties who, in our opinion and that of the California Department of Aging, had developed into model programs.

We looked for methods, procedures, and policies that not only improve services but resulted in cost savings to the organization. We reviewed their area plans, mission statements and goals, and objectives. We sought operational information regarding how these Counties:

- Dealt with mandates
- Managed State or federal requirements
- Managed their resources, including staff

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Alameda County provides services to seniors and adults through several of its departments or divisions within departments and through contracts with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and other subcontractors.



In 1978 the Alameda Board of Supervisors was selected by the California Department of Aging to serve as the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA). The AAA was to be organized so that it was an identifiable department of the County's Social Services Agency, thus the Department of Aging was created. The primary functions of the AAA were:

- Develop and implement of an area plan for a comprehensive and coordinated system of service for older persons
- Provide a visible central unit for advocacy and coordination
- Develop a program to monitor and evaluate all senior programs

Additionally, SSA administers the Public Guardian Conservator and all Title XX Adult Services through the Division of Adult Services. Medical eligibility services to senior and adults are delivered through the Economic Benefits Department. Outside of SSA, health care services are provided through Clinics and Highland Hospital. Primary and preventative health care services are provided by CBO contracts and at County facilities. These health services are provided under the auspices of the Department of Health Service. The County, in addition to serving as the administrator of programs, also is a direct fund source for aging and adult services. County General Fund dollars are not the sole source of funding for senior centers. Cities within the County also provide funds.

Some of the programs undertaken by these departments provide services to the same clients/patients. Employment services to seniors are provided by the Job Training Partnership Act Private Industry Council (JTPA/PIC) (three percent set aside for Seniors) while the Title V Senior Employment Training Program is contracted out by the Department of Aging. To date no move has been made to have these two employment programs work in concert with one another.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In this subsection, we present the issues we identified during the course of our Aging and Adult Services review. These issues are:

- Aging and Adult Services are fragmented and coordination between programs is nonexistent
- The advocacy and program development role of the Commission on Aging has had minimal support by SSA
- Administrative support of Aging and Adult Services programs has been less than adequate

ISSUE #11

Aging and Adult Services are fragmented and coordination between programs is nonexistent.

Condition

There is no cohesive system which includes all services from all departments. What exists are services which are fragmented with little or no coordination between departments (Aging and IHSS or Aging and APS, Aging and all other Adult Services, Aging and Employment Programs). All persons involved recognize the importance of interdepartmental cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and the sharing of information, but no one has taken the leadership role to make it happen.

Cause

The provision of services for the Aging and the Adult population has been developed on a program by program basis using a stand-alone organizational approach. Relationships, personalities, stringent role, and responsibilities and narrow authority have dictated the placement of services and not service functionalities guided by client needs.

The lack of leadership to create a coordinated model of services within SSA has created a vacuum which no one has attempted to fill.

Effect

Aging and Adult Services in SSA have been administered in an uncoordinated manner which means maximization of program services and resources has not occurred. Instead, islands of autonomy based on specific programs or placement within an organization have been maintained. Under this approach, awareness of complementary programs and services were unknown, pockets of interest emerged based on the frustration with Agency's operations, and the credibility of SSA as a service provider suffered.



ISSUE #12

The advocacy and program development role of the Commission on Aging has had minimal support by SSA.

Condition

The advisory role of the Commission on Aging to the Board of Supervisors and the Director of the Department of Aging has not been fully utilized and thus rendered insignificant. There is a strong perception held by most of the aging and senior community advocates and providers, and even some SSA staff that the past Department Director and the current Agency Director have little interest in serving the aging and adult population. Many CBOs and Senior Advocates stated that they have offered their assistance to SSA but it has never been accepted. The current fragmented program services, lack of exchange of information, and isolation of facilities represent the legacy of the past leadership.

Cause

The overwhelming reason given by most as to why the current approach to services exist is the personal philosophy of the past leadership within SSA.

While this is difficult to believe, as identified in other areas of this report, the personal system is in fact a major issue regarding SSA as a whole.

Effect

The lack of a valid concern for advocacy and program development has resulted in:

- Poor information about the client's needs
- Little program innovation
- Lack of credibility

Although many CBOs, senior advocates, as well as the Commission on Aging offered their assistance to improve the service approach of SSA, it has not been accepted. As a result, some senior advocates seek to establish a stand-alone Agency to administer the Aging and Adult Services programs.

ISSUE #13

Administrative support of Aging and Adult Services programs has been less than adequate.

Condition

Board of Supervisors and the Area Agency on Aging requested and received designation as the lead Service Enriched (SEED) agency in Alameda County to coordinate all senior services. The designation was made in the 1986-1987 budget year by the California Department

of Aging. In spite of this designation, it appears that little has been done.

CBO and senior advocates have offered their assistance in the planning and development of a service system that would include all entities providing services. Currently no procedure to allow this to develop exists except the SEED process/authority and, again it has not been used.

Members of the Commission on Aging believe that the SSA leadership (past and present) does not perceive seniors as a valuable community resource. The Commission's advisory responsibility for program planning and development exists only in writing and cited as an example of the level of attention given to the Commission by SSA.

We observed staff who have good cooperative working relationships with providers as well as staff who have developed their own make shift resources and their own network to assist their clients. These are not always shared but could be. Automation that is now in place in Adult Services and in Department of Aging is not compatible therefore there is no sharing of information regarding client needs or provided services.

Cause

The lack of attention to Community needs, separation of functions, and a leadership style has been the basis for the current lack of credibility by the community, low morale of the staff, and frustration by community decision makers.

Effect

SSA lacks credibility in its support of the Aging and Adult Services programs. Some Community groups desire to have SSA stripped of its responsibility regarding services to this client group. Needless to say, this has become a highly charged, politically sensitive situation.

CONCLUSIONS

SSA's services delivery approach to serving aging and adults is woefully inadequate.

- Changes in philosophy, policy, funding, and structure of social service programs need to occur.
- With no centralized administrative structure to oversee adult and senior service it is virtually impossible to conduct needs assessments, and to



achieve an unduplicated count of the number of clients served in any of the service categories provided by the County.

- There is no single tracking system, so some eligible persons are served very well and some are not served at all.
- The duplication, overlap of the departments responsibility for clients can be avoided with the creation and development of a community based system of care for aging and adults.
- A strategy is needed to effectively and efficiently serve older adults by establishing linkages between the variety of service in the county having different mandates missions and roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #14

After completing our analysis of issues related to Aging and Adult Services, we concluded that many of the required activities related to only one major action, namely, to change how you approach and conduct business.

SSA should redesign its current approach and organizational structure in administering Aging and Adult Services programs.

Aging and all Adult Services should be consolidated and co-located into one department (i.e., IHSS, APS, Conservator/Guardian Elder Care Title V employment JTPA older worker, etc.).

The consolidation of programs which offer similar or related services to the same client-base is not only operationally logical but economically beneficial as well. The coordination, collaboration, cooperation, and/or consolidation of:

- Client information
- Program services
- Fiscal resources
- Personnel resources

This would result, at a minimum, in developing relationships, creating logical alliances, and expanding referral networks.

The fiscal benefits of this approach include:

- Less administrative costs
- Less time spent on duplicating information or services
- Ability to leverage fund sources by transfer, match, or sharing
- Ability to effectively leverage clients to serve in other programs

Although these actions would require time to accomplish, the immediate beneficiary of initiating this approach would be the leadership of SSA. SSA leadership would benefit by sending a message that it is committed to:

- Doing business differently
- Creative, effective, and efficient management approaches
- Supporting the aging and senior population of the County

Some of the considerations should be:

- That a director be selected who can give leadership, has experience in gerontology and geriatrics, will be the advocate for seniors and adults who can work cooperatively with community groups
- That the development of a comprehensive and coordinated community-based system of care plan for Alameda County begin immediately – (Use of the Guidebook for Area Agencies on Aging 1991 - Developing Community Based Systems of Care is recommended)



SECTION V
AUTOMATION

V. AUTOMATION

INTRODUCTION

In this section we present findings resulting from our review of the Alameda County Social Service Agency's (SSA's) automation environment and practices. The major areas reviewed were:

- The Case Data System (CDS) and subsystems
- The Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) Personal Computer (PC) Local Area Network (LAN) system
- The SSA Automation Strategy
- The relationship between SSA and County Data Processing (DP)

The objectives of our review were to evaluate the:

- Overall level of automated support for service delivery
- Ability of SSA to utilize existing systems to the maximum advantage and to define new system requirements
- Ability of SSA to define its own automation future and to pursue that future
- Adequacy of system analysis support

The key action steps we undertook to complete our review of automation at SSA were to:

- Survey three Case Data counties (San Diego, Santa Clara and San Francisco) to expand the basis for evaluating Alameda SSA practices and procedures
- Interview executive staff, program managers, and line staff to identify practices and procedures
- Interview County DP executives and staff assigned to support SSA to evaluate the type and level of support provided

BACKGROUND REVIEW OF SSA's AUTOMATED ENVIRONMENT

Automation at the SSA supports the following critical success factors:

- Identify who and how people are served or have been served by SSA
- Provide for the timely distribution of economic assistance
- Promote accountability, accuracy, and professionalism in service
- Increase efficiency and effectiveness of service
- Provide for complex management information needs

The Alameda County Social Service Agency's primary source of automated systems is through the Case Data System, which provides automated support for many of the programs administered by SSA. The primary automated CDS systems in production at Alameda County are the:

- Main CDS system used to support Economic Benefits programs
- Social Services Reporting System (SSRS) used to support Child Welfare Services
- GAIN Information System (GIS) used to support GAIN
- Client Index used by all programs to provide a comprehensive listing of all people served by SSA

The CDS systems run on central, mainframe processors at the Alameda County Data Processing Department (DPD). SSA is one of the largest users of County data processing resources. The CDS dependence on mainframes has tended to create an overall emphasis on mainframe processing by SSA. As a result, there is relatively little decentralized processing occurring at SSA. However, some decentralized, in-house systems do exist:

- A PRIME minicomputer system operated and used by the Conservator for Public Guardian activities



- An antiquated WANG system used by administration and support staff for limited office automation purposes
- A limited number of PCs, many of which are quite old, used mostly by mid-level supervisors for word processing and specialized databases
- A PC LAN at GAIN administration

In addition to the emphasis on mainframe processing, professional operations, programming, and system analysis are also provided by County Data Processing. Currently, County Data Processing is providing approximately 5.5 personnel equivalents to support:

- Half-time account manager
- Four programmers
- One temporarily assigned system analyst

Despite the emphasis on County DP, SSA's chargebacks are not high in comparison to other Case Data Counties. In addition, our review of chargeback processes did not uncover any issues.

The only computer operations which occur in SSA are associated with the PRIME computer in the Conservator's Office. Even in this case, the person in charge of operations is an accounting clerk supervisor, and does not have a data processing background or training.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

Our overall finding is that SSA is significantly behind in defining and pursuing automated solutions to its pressing business problems. Automation has historically not been viewed as critical to the success of SSA. As a result, SSA has not dedicated the resources needed to have the appropriate in-house professional data processing expertise. This has led to an inability to develop approaches to improve operations either through more effective use of existing systems or through development of new capabilities.

Recently, executive management has begun to look more closely at automation as a method of improving the way social services programs are administered and managed. As a result, SSA has created the Data Processing Coordination and System Analysis unit in recognition of the need for in-house system analysis.



The new unit is staffed principally with program specialists instead of people with data processing backgrounds, despite the intent of the new unit to provide data processing analysis. The background and duties of the unit's staff has meant that most of the work performed by the unit is work traditionally associated with program specialists. Relatively little systems analysis is done. Accordingly, the new unit has up to now been unable to provide the breadth and depth of analysis and support required by SSA.

The lack of commitment to automation is evidenced in the results of the survey of other Case Data counties. By comparison to the counties surveyed, Alameda has the fewest resources devoted to automation. As is graphically depicted in Exhibit V-1, Alameda ranks the lowest in all areas of measurement, including:

- Case Data budget
- Distributed processing performed internally
- Internal data processing budget and professional in-house analysis staff

The overall lack of emphasis on automation has prevented SSA from developing a strategic vision of the direction automation must take if it is to fulfill its mission and mandates in the future. The lack of vision has also hampered SSA's ability to function day-to-day by making it difficult to identify specific goals for automation and to quantify the expected results. As a result, SSA is ill equipped to evaluate and improve upon the results of automation initiatives which have already been taken.

CASE STUDY

In the course of our automation review, we identified an example of duplicative and cumbersome information processing which is illustrative of our overall findings. The case study involves the flow of information from social workers placing children who are dependent wards of the court.

EXHIBIT V-1

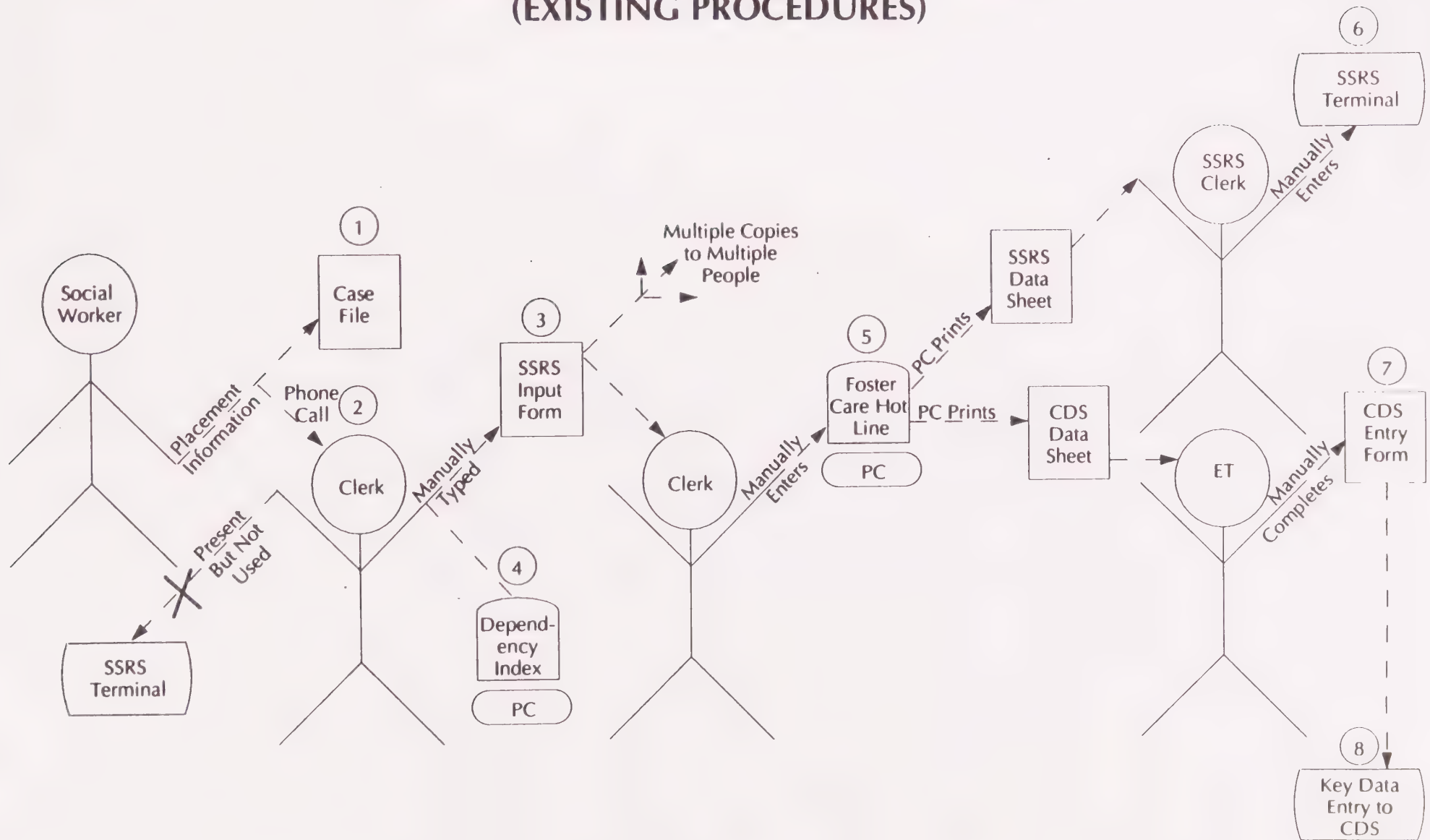
COMPARISON OF ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY TO THE THREE CASE DATA COUNTIES SURVEYED

COUNTY	TOTAL STAFF	ANALYST AND DP STAFF	CDS BUDGET	INTERNAL BUDGET
Alameda	1400	1	\$1,918,514	\$80,000*
San Francisco	1200	6.5	\$2,364,000	\$632,000*
San Diego	4000	22	\$2,100,000	\$2,600,000
Santa Clara	1900	20	\$2,700,000	\$2,360,000*
<p>Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Francisco's internal DP budgets do not include salaries for data processing staff. \$80,000 annually was used as the approximate cost of a DP professional.</p>				

The case study involves an extremely duplicative process of recording Foster Care Placement Information. The information flow found in the case study is illustrated in Exhibit V-2. Although the flow of information presented in the exhibit is not representative for all dependent ward placements, it is representative of a significant subset of placements. The placement actions are:

- The social worker places a dependent child and records the information in the physical case file.
- The social worker phones a clerk who informally records the information on scratch paper.
- The clerk uses a typewriter to type the information onto a color coded, multi part Social Services Recording System (SSRS) Input Form. (The information is manually typed despite there being an SSRS terminal in the original clerk's office). The forms are distributed to various people who are required to be aware of the placement, such as the social work supervisor.
- The clerk also inputs a subset of the placement information into a PC database which is used to keep a limited index of placement activity.
- One copy of the SSRS Input Form is sent to a clerk who maintains the Foster Care Hot Line. This clerk enters the information into a PC program developed for the Hot Line. This program automatically generates two data sheets: another SSRS data sheet and a CDS data sheet.
- At this point it is somewhat unclear, but either the Hot Line SSRS data sheet is sent to the SSRS clerk or the original SSRS Input Form is forwarded to the clerk,(or even, perhaps, both forms). In any case, the information is entered by the clerk into SSRS.
- In addition, the CDS data sheet is sent to an Eligibility Technician (ET) who transfers it to a CDS input document and forwards the document for processing.
- Finally, the CDS input document is key-data-entered into the CDS system.

EXAMPLE OF DUPLICATE DATA ENTRY (EXISTING PROCEDURES)



Each circled number represents a repetitious processing of the original information.

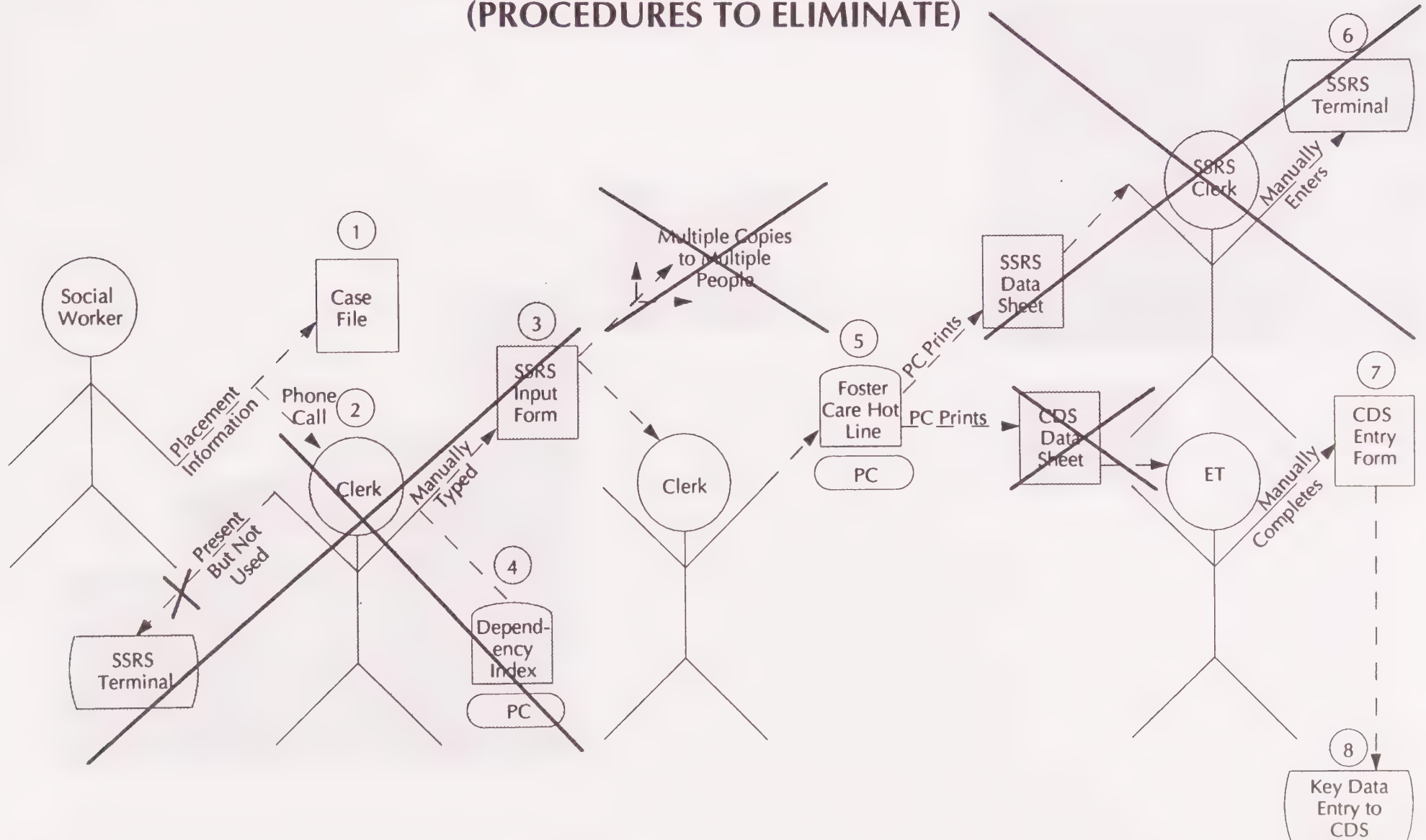
Although this is a worst case scenario, we feel it is highly illustrative of the need for professional data processing and work-flow analysis. Exhibit V-3 is an example of the possibilities such an analysis might reveal:

- The entire activity of the original clerk is duplicative and potentially could be eliminated
- The physical copies of the SSRS Input Form could be replaced by direct access to SSRS
- The separate Dependency Index (referred to in Exhibit (V-2) could be eliminated and be replaced by SSRS data
- The dependency social worker could call the Foster Care Hot Line worker (as currently all other placement workers do)
- The needs met by the Hot Line database could either be met by SSRS, or an electronic interface could be developed between the PC and SSRS to avoid duplicative entry of data
- The involvement of the SSRS clerk in placement changes could be eliminated
- The paper interface with the ET could be replaced either by a direct interface with the CDS system, or at minimum, with an electronic mail notice to the ET to alert him or her to the change

Exhibit V-4 assumes the maximum elimination of duplication. It is apparent that enhancing the capabilities of what already is in place and changing current procedures would greatly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the flow of Foster Care Placement Information.

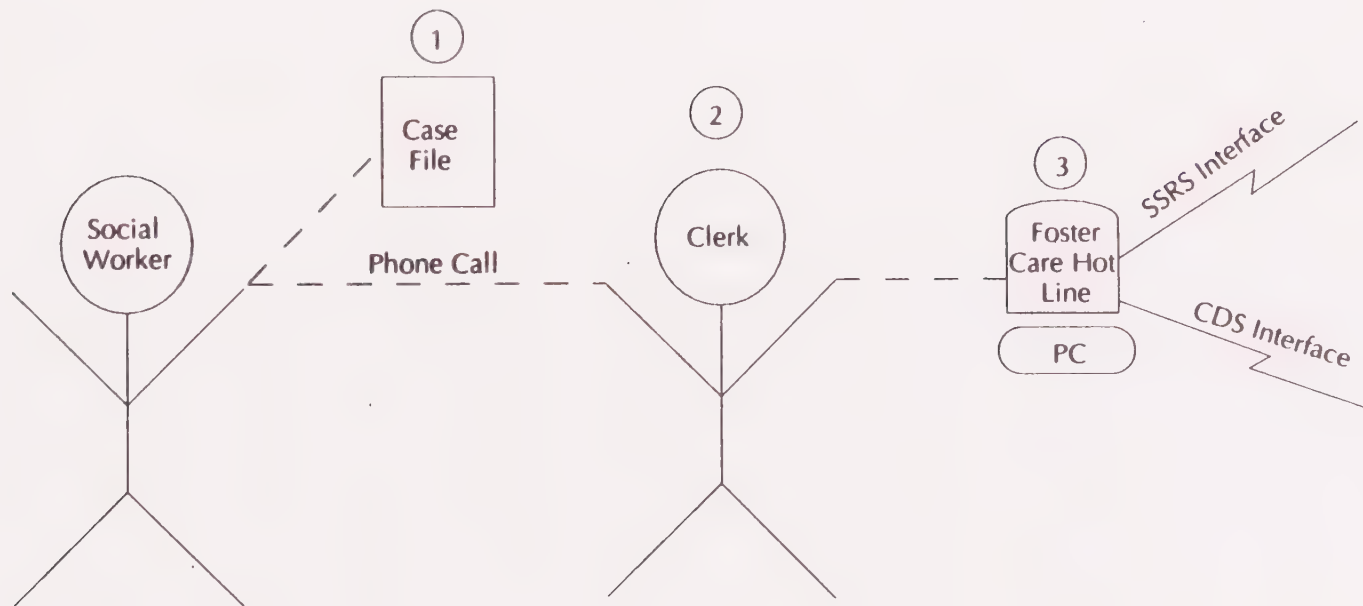


EXAMPLE OF DUPLICATE DATA ENTRY (PROCEDURES TO ELIMINATE)



Each circled number represents a repetitious processing of the original information.

EXAMPLE OF DUPLICATE DATA ENTRY (INTERIM SOLUTION)



ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In this subsection we present the issues which were identified during the course of our automation review. The issues are:

- The agency has a minimum investment in automation beyond the use of the Case Data mainframe system and related subsystems:
- Executive management relies upon the DPD for basic automation analysis
- SSA is not achieving maximum benefit from its use of the CDS and subsystem
- Client and case information is kept in numerous duplicate manual and automated files using unnecessarily time consuming and labor intensive processes
- Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) is not well understood by SSA.

The issues are organized into condition, cause, and effect.

ISSUE #14

The agency has a minimum investment in automation beyond the use of the Case Data mainframe system and related subsystems.

Condition

CDS constitutes over 90% of the computerization of SSA, and effectively 100% of the budget for automation. New automation equipment, such as PCs and printers, are purchased out of general capital funds. There is no separate budget for data processing equipment procurement. Except for the PRIME system operated by the Conservator, SSA operates no systems of any significance on its own. (It should be noted that the PRIME system was procured when the Conservator's office was not a part of SSA.)

Cause

Historically, SSA's automation strategy has been to implement CDS to run at County Data Processing. This is partially the result of a legacy of not viewing information as a strategic asset, and partially due to a decision to cut machines rather than people as funding became more limited.

As a result, there has been little incentive or rationale for committing scarce resources to automation. Funds



were allocated principally to support CDS and were viewed as a cost of doing business. Since automation was not viewed as an investment for the future, new areas were unfunded or at best underfunded.

Effect

The lack of a strategic outlook for automation and the reliance on CDS has led to unmet needs and has seriously hampered the efficiency of many programs throughout SSA. For example, Adult Protective Services (APS) has no automation of any sort to assist workers, supervisors and clerks in the performance of their jobs.

The failure to increase and enhance automation other than CDS has led to stagnation not just in programs which like Adult Protective Services have no automation at all, but in nearly all programs. Even in Economic Benefit programs, which are generally the most automated, activities which were once simple are becoming increasingly difficult because of the stress on support structures.

For example, SSA is just now implementing on-line AFDC processing, because it is finally available from Case Data. By contrast, San Diego County developed the Automated Intake System (AIS) and the Automated Eligibility System (AES) on its own. Santa Clara County also eliminated most batch processing by purchasing mini-computers which act as front ends to the CDS. The computers eliminated the need to batch CDS input forms for centralized key-data-entry. As a result, updates are done more efficiently and at a significant cost savings to Santa Clara County.

SSA's almost exclusive reliance on CDS has also resulted in a failure to manage automation in other areas. For example, individual workers, supervisors, and managers are slowly beginning to acquire and use their own PCs. Often, they "go it alone" and automate processes themselves. This has sometimes added to the stress rather than to relieve it.

The two PC databases, as illustrated above (i.e., the Dependency Index and the Foster Care Hot Line) are examples of the kinds of "information dead ends" which can occur when stressed staff take things into their own hands without guidance. Databases by nature should be integrated and accessible. These two programs create, in effect, "islands of information" which are difficult to manage or to tap.



Finally, SSA is unable to determine the cost benefit of the systems in place. For example, one of the most completely automated divisions in SSA is GAIN, which uses an on-line Case Data subsystem called the Gain Information System. Each GAIN worker has a terminal on their desk. The workers are able to enter and immediately access case information themselves. There is little redundant information being maintained and many basic processes, letters, notices, schedules, etc. are automated by the system. From a programmatic point of view, GIS is an excellent system.

However, of the three other Case Data counties surveyed, only one, San Diego, uses the GAIN Information System. Both San Francisco and Santa Clara developed their own in-house systems which operate on mini-computers. The decision to do it themselves was partially the result of internal analysis which showed developing and operating their own system on a mini-computer is more cost effective than running the CDS GAIN Information System on a county mainframe. This point is relevant to Alameda SSA, due to the fact that SSA budgets in excess of \$300,000 yearly to run GIS at County Data Processing.

ISSUE #15

Executive management relies upon the DPD for basic automation analysis.

Condition

The level of support provided to SSA by County Data Processing Department (DPD) is relatively high. DPD has permanently assigned an account manager and four programmers to SSA. In addition, a systems analyst has been temporarily assigned to SSA to complete a user needs assessment and to recommend data processing projects for consideration by SSA executive management (the analyst's report is due to be completed in the Fall of this year). By contrast, none of the surveyed counties reported using analyst or even programming staff from central data processing.

In San Diego, for example, the Social Services Department has taken over the lead role in defining not only what it wants to achieve in automation, but in deciding

the technical direction to take in realizing the automation goals. Examples of San Diego initiatives include:

- The Automated Intake System and Automated Eligibility System, are in many ways precursors to SAWS.
- The "New Beginnings" initiative, which has networked the Social Services Department with other County departments, school districts, community colleges, and cities. As a result of this network, for example, schools are able to have eligibility to hot lunch programs automatically verified by the Department through an electronic interface. Schools are also able to use the interface to report child abuse to the Department. Plans are underway to extend the interface to the local Section 8 public housing agency.
- San Diego County has also taken the initiative to have an APS developed by Case Data.

Cause

Historically there has been no specific unit with responsibility for data processing analysis within the SSA. This is in part due to the lack of emphasis placed upon automation by past administrations. It is also partly due to the almost exclusive reliance on CDS. In the CDS it has been quite possible to limit SSA's role to user's analysis and input, while leaving systems analysis to the vendor, and technical analysis to County DP..

The lack of an internal SSA vision of proactive data processing management has been matched by the view accepted by many within the Agency and the County, that SSA should rely upon County Data Processing for professional systems analysis. The assignment of a County system analyst to develop an automation plan for SSA, instead of hiring an analyst to work for SSA, is an example of this principal in action.

As discussed previously, SSA has recently reorganized the Program Support Administration to include the Data Processing Coordination and System Analysis unit. However, the unit has no professional systems staff. By contrast, all of the Case Data Counties surveyed reported having internal professional system analysis and data processing staff. San Francisco reports having 6.5 professional DP staff, and Santa Clara and San Diego each report 20 or more such staff.

Effect

The lack of internal analytical support has hampered SSA's ability to meet its automation goals. Existing automation is often underutilized, unnecessarily inefficient, and unreliable. Opportunities for new systems and/or enhancements to existing systems are not routinely identified. As a result, a number of SSA needs are being insufficiently addressed, for example:

- Executive management has a need for on-going expertise on automation initiatives, such as the Statewide Automated Welfare System and the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS)
- SSA will need to continue to define its automation requirements after the County DP analyst has completed the study, however the analyst will likely be reassigned by DPD to other duties
- Users who are developing their own PC programs need on-going support for their work

The PC programs described in the Case Study are illustrative of this last problem. Both the Foster Care Hot Line and the Dependency Index are attractive, easy to use, and meet the immediate needs of the users for whom they were developed. However, both programs have serious flaws:

- The programs are not documented so when the author leaves no one is left who can work on the program.
- As already shown, the programs are inherently duplicative of SSRS and do not fit into the overall information stream for placement information. As a result, one unit may be somewhat more efficient and other units are actually less efficient
- There are no quality control, audit, and security procedures applied to the programs.

This type of activity is likely to increase as more equipment, especially PCs, is made available to staff.

The problem is that there is no avenue for this creativity to be officially expressed by the staff who wish to use PCs to improve their work. As a result, staff ideas are not



being used to benefit SSA. This in itself represents a loss of potential productivity. However, more than that, it also represents a real risk. Sooner or later, it is likely that the workers with access to a PC will begin to develop their own solutions to their problems.

Because of lack of resources, of ability to review the entire information flow, and of professional programming knowledge and experience, these homegrown solutions will likely be as ultimately detrimental to the information needs of SSA as the previously described Dependency Index and Foster Care Hot Line programs.

By contrast, Santa Clara Social Services Agency has professional analysts who actively work with line staff to develop staff's ideas. For example, it was recently discovered that a few social workers were using the word processing available to them to format routine reports they must submit to the courts. Other social workers were finding out about the forms, borrowing them, adjusting them to meet their own view of things, and using them.

The result was a slow drift away from the standard formats and practices established by Santa Clara County for these reports. However, because of the availability of information system staff, Santa Clara County has been able to assign an analyst to work with the activist social workers and develop the forms on an official basis. Once an official form is developed, the unofficial form is eliminated and replaced with the official one.

ISSUE #16

SSA is not achieving maximum benefit from its use of the CDS and subsystems.

Condition

The CDS is used automate the programs of the Economic Benefits Department, such as AFDC, Food Stamp, Medi-Cal, and General Assistance aid processes. Some of the programs are more highly automated than others, such as AFDC which is being converted from batch to on-line processes. Other programs are minimally automated, such as General Assistance which still operates on the basic batch processes and has been a part of Case Data since the 1970's.

AFDC has been converted to on-line processing in order to increase productivity. These productivity increases

depend upon a large investment in computer equipment, especially computer terminals. Ideally, each worker should have their own terminal; however, the system allows for one terminal per two workers, if the terminals are close to the workers' desks. In order for SSA to derive maximum benefit from the introduction of on-line, it will have to purchase sufficient equipment to ensure workers have terminals immediately available to them.

The Social Services Recording System is a Case Data subsystem which is used for reporting of social services clients, services, and activities. It is essentially a system designed to collect data needed for management information, however, SSRS does have some worker productivity features. SSRS has two versions:

- The original batch version, which imitates the basic Case Data processes that use paper turnaround documents as the interface between workers and the computer
- An enhanced on-line version, designed specifically for Child Welfare Services, which allows workers and unit clerks to enter information directly into the system

SSA is deriving no benefit from SSRS in the Adoptions and Adult programs. However, SSRS has been implemented at SSA by Child Welfare Services, which uses the enhanced on-line version. The on-line version is designed to allow workers to enter information into the system themselves. The design also allows the unit or specialist clerks to enter the information using forms which are completed by social workers. It is important to note, that the use of clerks essentially re-converts the on-line system back to a batch system, and defeats nearly all of the goals of on-line services.

As in on-line CDS, a significant investment in equipment will be necessary to maximize benefit of on-line SSRS. However, SSA will also have to significantly enhance training for social workers and supervisors so that they are able to use the system themselves.

The GAIN Information System is another Case Data subsystem used at SSA. GIS, which automates the processing of clients through the GAIN program, is the

most up-to-date of the CDS systems in that it:

- Is on-line, so that information is updated instantly, and burdensome batch processes are eliminated
- Is used directly by every GAIN worker, so that the use of the physical case file is minimized
- Provides valuable worker productivity services, such as automated scheduling, automated reports, and inter-office electronic mail, so that use of the system is as much a part of the job as using the phone

One major feature of how GIS was implemented is that each GAIN worker has their own terminal. This has enhanced the ease of use of the system and allowed the greatest productivity benefit. GIS should be a model for SSA for all its on-line processing. The only caution is that the system is regarded by workers as somewhat de-humanizing. This is a serious issue whenever human services are automated and requires that SSA continuously:

- Evaluate the system
- Conduct creative training for workers
- Perform intelligent work flow analysis

Cause

The point has been made earlier that SSA has viewed Case Data as a cost of doing business rather than an investment. One of the major reasons for this outlook has to do with the fundamentals of cost benefit analysis. Computer systems are costly to buy, develop, and implement. That cost must be recovered somehow, either through improved services or cost savings. Cost savings are generally only attainable through staffing reductions. Neither the County, nor the Agency have traditionally felt that trading workers for computer terminals is a good investment.

This must change if SSA is to benefit from automation. It is infeasible to expect taxpayers to pay for expensive systems while still supporting the same numbers of costly staff. Executives, managers, supervisors, workers, union representatives, County Officials, and the general public must be educated to the facts that there are some aspects of human services which are better performed by machines than by people.



Effect

Everywhere in SSA one encounters the complaint that workers are overworked. At first one wonders why they are overworked since case loads are essentially the same for most categories of workers as they were a decade or more ago. However, looking behind the surface one sees two major problems:

- *Increasingly complex program requirements:* Though caseload sizes have remained fairly stable, the cases have become more complex and time consuming to maintain, which has meant more work for staff.
- *Numerous uncovered caseloads:* Staff have left positions at SSA more quickly than the Agency has been able to replace them. This has forced the workers who remain to do what they can to cover not only their own cases, but also the cases of workers who have left.

As a result, SSA is left with an increasingly demoralized work force trying to perform an increasingly difficult job. Of course, automation is considered to be the solution. However, in the end, unless automation is cost justified it will not be fully implemented. If it is not fully implemented, it will not produce the productivity increases hoped for, and essentially the situation will not have changed.

San Diego County Department of Social Services is an example of a social services agency which has committed itself to reducing the work force through automation. As a result the Department, in fact the County as a whole, has one of the lowest worker to county resident ratios in the State and nation. Is this the direction that Alameda Social Services Agency needs to go? Probably not so extreme, but it must begin to move in that direction, or eventually administration of human services will become unmanageable.

ISSUE #17

Client and case information is kept in numerous duplicate manual and automated files, using unnecessarily time consuming and labor intensive processes

Condition

A number of examples were found where information is kept in duplicative manual and automated files. The primary example is the one cited in the case study. Many



other examples could be cited, such as:

- The use of manually typed monthly case listings, while SSRS automated listings are literally thrown away because they are not understood by workers, and are considered to be out of date and unreliable.
- The persistence of manual systems requiring manipulation of the same data by many people,. For example, activity logs maintained by workers are collected and tallied by unit clerks, and then collected and tallied by section clerks, and finally used to create reports.

A typical example of manual over processing is found in Adult Protective Services referrals. When an APS referral is received:

- The duty worker enters adult abuse information on:
 - .. a risk assessment form (usually after having scratched out long hand notes during the phone referral)
 - .. a "pre-screening sheet"
- The worker then submits both sheets to a unit clerk, and the unit clerk completes:
 - .. an intake log form
 - .. a card index files of referrals
 - .. an assignment log form
 - .. an activity log by worker form

The pre-screening form is then sent to another clerk for clearance in the Client Index, and the referral is given to the social worker assigned to the case. The entire process takes approximately two days.

Cause

Information is thought of almost exclusively in terms of the immediate needs and interests of each employee. Activity to share information is considered to be "a nice to do" but non-essential.

Few people know how the information they collect is used by others. There is little appreciation for how sharing information in easier and timely ways would improve services to clients and make everyone's job easier. This situation leads to "islands of information" where each employee must replicate data about clients in order to be sure that the information needed for their job is available to them.



Effect

Each new demand placed on staff, whether to work more cases, to perform more duties, or to improve in performance, has a new information demand as a component. That demand may be expressed in terms of manual counts of activities or persons, completion of forms, or documentation of activity. Duplicate processes and data bases are created to respond to the new demands for information.

The resulting convoluted processes exacerbate to an already stressed delivery system and staff. In order to keep up, staff resort to defining information in more narrow terms. The result is even greater informational alienation and frustration throughout SSA.

ISSUE #18

The Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) is not well understood by SSA.

Condition

The actual functionality of SAWS, its likely implementation date, and its impact on the CDS and subsystem processes not included in the basic design are not fully understood.

SAWS is a State of California initiative which addresses the primary categorical aid programs administered in California: AFDC, Medi-Cal, and Food Stamps. As such SAWS is meant to replace the automation used in the administration of those programs.

The Agency is attempting to monitor SAWS very closely and is coordinating with County Data Processing to track the progress of SAWS. Though this activity has increased SSA's awareness of SAWS issues, it has not necessarily been translated to concrete steps to prepare for SAWS implementation and/or the impact of SAWS implementation.

Alameda County uses the Case Data System, which is, as such, targeted for replacement by SAWS. However, the Case Data System is not exclusively a system for support of AFDC, Medi-Cal, and Food Stamps. CDS also supports many other programs in Economic Benefits, Human Services, and Employment Services. Hence, when SAWS replaces CDS, it will not provide much of the support provided by CDS.

Each of the programs supported by CDS rely upon it in unique ways. As a result, each will be affected differently by the implementation of SAWS. A variety of approaches will be required to address the peculiar circumstances of each of the current dependencies. Some of these approaches are:

- Maintenance of parallel systems
- Terminating the link with CDS
- Expanding the capability of SAWS

There are other concerns about SAWS which must be addressed. Two SAWS systems are available to Alameda. SSA has identified itself with the SAWS alternative known as the Merced Automated Global Information Control System (MAGIC). An important aspect of MAGIC is the cost of equipment to implement the system.

As currently configured, MAGIC requires a three tier architecture: mainframe central processor, mini-computer file server, and PC workstations. Although the configuration is very advanced, it is also very costly. As a result, there will be strong pressure to change the configuration to make it less costly.

This pressure, if not anticipated and appropriately managed, will likely express itself in a failure to procure the quantity of equipment which is assumed in the design of the system. The result will be that anticipated increases in accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness will not be realized because workers will be unable to access the system as expected.

Still yet another critical aspect of SAWS is how it will change the nature of eligibility work. The numbers, types, and qualifications of staff will have to be constantly reevaluated as a result of implementation of SAWS. It will be imperative to prepare staff in advance for conversion and to have competent technical staff to evaluate the implementation and conversion the new system.

All counties in the state are facing similar problems. Although there are lessons to be learned from the approaches that other counties plan to take, it is clear that Alameda County presents a unique set of circumstances which will have to be addressed separately.

There is a process in place to address the issue of transfer of MAGIC to counties which have chosen that alternative. The State Department of Social Services has initiated a process where fourteen MAGIC counties will participate with the Department in writing a combination RFP/APD for conversion of MAGIC to a DB2 database and for transfer of MAGIC to the counties.

Alameda County is participating in this process. SSA is cooperating with both County Data Processing and the other counties. SSA plans to have two persons work on the RFP. However, it may not be possible to implement the plan, because the SSA does not have the staff to dedicate to the RFP activity.

Cause

There is an overall lack of a professional data processing capability which has limited SSA in all areas of automation, including planning for SAWS. SSA is ill equipped to:

- Identify its short term and long-term automation needs
- Perform the necessary analysis to determine the best way to meet those needs
- Define projects and advocate at the highest level for the resources to initiate the projects
- Monitor and manage the projects while in development
- Monitor and manage implementation of new systems
- Continuously train staff and evaluate system performance after implementation

Effect

SSA has a great many hopes for MAGIC. However, it is not able to define and quantify those hopes. This affects the ability of executives to strategically and tactically plan for the realization of those hopes. It is unlikely that their hopes will be realized unless SSA executives are able to plan for a successful implementation of MAGIC.



CONCLUSIONS

SSA is not prepared to evaluate and analyze its needs in order to adequately define, plan for, or implement automated systems.

Little analysis is being completed which leads to the ability of decision makers to evaluate SSA's needs. This has led to an overall lack of planning at all levels for automation. SSA will be unable to successfully meet the challenges of service and economy, nor the challenges of statewide automation initiatives without addressing this critical shortfall.

- **The Agency is unable to maximize use of current automation.**

Although far behind in automation, SSA still is very dependent on the computer systems it does have. These are far from fully utilized. Often, automatic reports are unreliable and unused, or access to terminals is so constrained that staff continue to operate manually. This causes an extra burden because staff must still spend time inputting information into systems which they can not fully use. It is important that SSA learn how to more fully utilize what it has both to help staff now and to be better prepared to implement the statewide systems.

- **Duplication and isolation of information has created many "information deadends" throughout SSA.**

Staff are required to develop and maintain numerous manual and PC files to do their jobs. The burdensome activity of maintaining these files impedes the flow of information about clients and cases from worker to worker and between sections.

The duplication results from a lack of analysis and planning and a lack of appropriate systems and equipment. Eliminating the "information deadends" is vital to increasing services to the public, enhancing employee morale, and containing costs.

- **The lack of automation hampers employees in the everyday performance of their duties.**

Employees struggle just to keep up with the increased pace of work. If measured by the quantity of work, such as numbers of cases per worker, it

looks as if Alameda SSA has successfully protected their workers from budget cuts. However, if measured by the actual work associated with each case, such as numbers of time workers must open a case file or record information about a fact or activity, it is clear that workers are far behind where they used to be.

The failure to apply appropriate automation solutions and technology to solve worker's everyday problems not only affects the productivity of employees, it leaves them with the feeling that their jobs are not considered important by SSA executive management, Alameda County, or the general public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following constitute our recommendations for addressing the issues we encountered during our review:

- SSA should develop a strategic vision, plan, and direction for automation.
- There is a need to manage the proliferation of PC databases and systems.
- Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis responsibilities should be separated from Program Specialist activities.
- The Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit should be considered a resource by everyone in SSA.

In addition, there are five recommendations which relate to computer controls, audit and security policies and procedures. The issues and findings relate to control, audit and security found in Section VI, Management. The management related control recommendations are presented in Section VI.

Recommendation #15

SSA should develop a strategic vision, plan, and direction for automation.

There recently have been several positive steps in that direction which include:

- The close attention now being paid to SAWS by executive management



- The creation of the Data Processing Coordination and System Analysis unit
- The assignment of a system analyst from County Data Processing to perform a user needs assessment and recommend data processing projects

As promising as these initiatives are, they are too tentative. Though SAWS is being looked at in a serious way, highly significant issues are not being identified and addressed. The new data processing unit represents the understanding of a need, however, it remains for the Agency to commit the resources necessary to staff the unit with professional systems analysis personnel. Finally, the assignment of an analyst from County Data Processing demonstrates a high level of County support for SSA, however, it will leave SSA without the ability to conduct ongoing systems analysis and needs assessments for itself.

As a result, the initiatives, though concrete steps in the right direction, do not in themselves represent an actual strategic outlook.

In order to think strategically, SSA should augment its internal Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit to include professional system analysts. Initially, at least one analyst should be hired with the expectation of continuing to hire others as SAWS and CWS/CMS develop further, and as new information needs are identified and justified.

It is highly desirable that the analysts be hired from outside SSA. Candidates should have specific experience which demonstrates information system business skills, including the ability to:

- Identify needs and develop requirements
- Develop alternatives and quantify the benefits of the alternatives
- Perform cost analysis
- Write, submit, and manage feasibility studies and advance planning documents through the approval process



- Write, release, and manage request for proposals through the procurement process
- Manage development, conversion, and implementation of new systems

Initially the new analyst should be used to develop an information strategic plan. A natural outgrowth of the strategic plan will be to determine how many systems analysts will be needed to allow the Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit to be fully operational. The mid- to long-term needs of SSA will likely require several analysts.

It is important to note that funding of the new positions, as well as the projects the new analysts recommend, will require that SSA and the County address their basic philosophy towards automation.

Foremost on the agenda of the new analyst should also be to proactively address SAWS issues. SSA should use the analyst to become more knowledgeable about the functional and technical design of both SAWS systems, MAGIC, and NAPAS. As SSA learns it should develop a its own unique SAWS approach and aggressively communicate that approach to the State, to the SAWS counties and vendors, and to other Case Data Counties with a view to obtaining acceptance of SSA's approach.

SSA should also begin to prepare for conversion to SAWS. Conversion plans should entail not only the programs and systems directly affected by SAWS, but those which are indirectly affected as well, such as GAIN Information System, General Assistance, and the Client Index.

Recommendation #16

There is a need to manage the proliferation of PC databases and systems.

A technically competent person is needed to serve as a PC coordinator to manage the proliferation of PC data bases and systems. The PC coordinator should work with users who have developed or wish to develop small scale PC databases and systems such as the Foster Care Hot Line, the Simulated Claim (see Issue X), the Dependency Index.

It is important to note that the recommendation to have in-house technical capability is not a recommendation

for SSA to develop its own programming shop. Whether or not SSA should develop its own systems, as do other large counties, is a completely open question that likely cannot be settled until after implementation of SAWS and CWS/CMS.

The roles and duty of the PC coordinator should be to:

- Develop PC system standards, such as standards for documentation, security, audit trails, and system testing. In addition, user interface standards should be developed, such as for screen formats, user instructions, function key use, etc.
- Identify, evaluate, audit, and control user developed systems. These systems should not be permitted to be used until they have been reviewed for compliance with PC standards.
- Serve as User Help Desk for users of PC systems and be competent to determine if PC problems are related to hardware, purchased software, or application software.
- Manage PC maintenance and repair.
- Assist in creating purchased software standards for word processing, spreadsheet, databases, communication, and other purposes.
- Chair a PC user group to promulgate standards, spearhead new ideas, and spread information about what has been already developed and is readily available.

It is also important to create standards limiting the applications which users are allowed to develop. Standards include numbers and types of users of the PC system, degree of effect on the business of SSA, and redundancy with established systems. Standards are essential to ensure that PCs are not used inappropriately.

Possible examples of inappropriate PC systems are the Foster Care Hot Line and the Dependency Index already discussed. Both these systems duplicate SSRS without replacing it. It is likely that SSA would be better served if users were required to use SSRS instead of these systems. The PC coordinator should assist in the development of application standards, and be the point person for administration of the standards.



Recommendation #17

Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis responsibilities should be separated from Program Specialist activities.

As stated previously, the majority of staff in the Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit are involved in duties which are not principally those of coordination and analysis of data processing systems. However, the data processing needs of SSA dictate that staff who are charged with data processing coordination should be dedicated to that task.

Currently only one staff person, working on a contract basis, performs the function of data processing coordination full time. This person is responsible for coordination of SSRS activity. As SSRS coordinator, this person is fully occupied in implementing the main portions of SSRS for Children Services. An additional coordinator is needed to assist current users and to extend SSRS to other areas. Both SSRS coordinators will likely be needed to work with the State and vendor in the development of the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System.

The function of CDS coordination is currently performed by people whose main duties are related to being Program Specialists. At least one Program Specialist should be refocused exclusively to perform CDS coordination activity. CDS coordination duties should include:

- Implementation of new or enhanced CDS features or subsystems, such as on-line CDS
- Identifying and justifying equipment needs, such as for additional terminals
- Identifying and justifying new enhancements to CDS either through the Joint Committee process or as Separate Services

Recommendation #18

The Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit should be considered a resource by everyone in SSA.

Executive, supervisory and line staff should be encouraged to question the way information is processed and maintained. User focus groups should be established

and should meet regularly. The findings and recommendations of these groups should be routinely reviewed and analyzed by the Data Processing Coordination and Systems Analysis unit. Quick and responsive feed back to the users should be standard operating procedures for the unit.

In short, line staff must know about the activities of the unit and feel that it is directly relevant to them. The unit must be constantly developing recommendations to meet the everyday needs of staff throughout SSA. The recommendations should be made directly to decision makers and routinely lead to practical changes in the way business is conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONTROL, AUDIT AND SECURITY FOR AUTOMATED SYSTEMS

The computer related recommendations are discussed in this subsection. The recommendations are:

- SSA should develop policies and procedures for Control, Audits, and Security (CA&S) and assign responsibilities for Internal Control and Security Officers.
- SSA should develop standards for all new or modified automated systems for consideration of CA&S.
- SSA should ensure that the internal controls and security features of the CDS are sufficient to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse.
- SSA should ensure that the CDS security system is corrected to prevent improper logging off of the system.
- SSA should develop and document security profiles for each employee classification which specify what access will be granted to all systems.

The following are detailed discussions of each of the recommendations.



Recommendation #19

SSA should develop policies and procedures for CA&S and assign responsibilities for Internal Control and Security Officers.

During our review, we learned that SSA does not have a clearly documented CA&S security policy. In addition, procedures documentation is limited to security documentation for the CDS. Other system documentation does not specifically address internal control, audit trail, and security procedures.

The lack of documentation exists because staff resources have not been available to prepare policy and procedures for incorporation into administrative manuals, procedures guides, and system user documentation.

Because policies and procedures are not clearly documented, there is a lack of accountability for development and implementation of effective controls, audit trails for systems, and security. SSA would benefit from more explicit policies and procedures which would help to ensure that control, audit, and security issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

We recommend that SSA:

- Develop brief, clear policy statements for internal controls, auditability of manual and automated systems, and security. The policy statements should establish overall SSA policy, set high level goals, and specify organizational responsibilities.
- Issue a directive specifying accountability for control, audit, and security. In particular, an internal control and security officer should be designated who will have overall responsibility for design and implementation of effective controls, audit trails, and security measures. As necessary, organizational components should each designate a CA&S manager to act as a liaison with the CA&S officer, ensure policies and procedures are adhered to in their components, and train and inform personnel in their components.



Recommendation #20

SSA should develop standards for all new or modified automated systems for consideration of CA&S.

We were informed by the SSA information systems staff that there are no specific standards for control, audit and security for automated systems. Such standards are needed to ensure that CA&S considerations are addressed when modifying existing or implementing new automated systems.

SSA currently has no standards in part because most life cycle responsibilities lie with the County DP department. However, responsibility for CA&S must lie with SSA if it is to fulfill its fiduciary responsibilities.

Many agencies include such standards as part of their systems development life cycle methodology. The standards typically require:

- Consideration of CA&S during project planning, requirements definition, and system design
- Specific minimum requirements for internal controls, audit trails, and security. As an example, the standards might require that all modified or new systems provide a report of all transactions posted to a master file, specifying the source of the transaction, such as the date, employee, and workstation.
- Life cycle documents be reviewed by the CA&S Officer for adequacy.
- Involvement of financial management personnel in any systems project with financial management implications, to ensure that CA&S concerns are adequately addressed.

We recommend that SSA develop standards for consideration of CA&S for all modified or newly developed systems. The standards may be developed based on a number of sources, such as those in use in other counties, commercially available life cycle management standards, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants publications regarding internal controls, such as Statements on Auditing Standards 30 and 55, and accounting and computer industry literature. The standards should be clear and concise and made a required part of all SSA information systems projects.



Recommendation #21

SSA should ensure that the internal controls and security features of the CDS are sufficient to prevent fraud, waste and abuse.

The CDS is SSA's primary system for administering its programs. To our knowledge, the system of internal controls designed into CDS has no major deficiencies, but we are unaware of any comprehensive review and testing which would ensure that the controls operate as designed. In addition, the security software should be evaluated and tested.

This effort should be done in cooperation with other CDS user counties rather than at Alameda County expense. SSA should first confirm first that such a review has not been done. The review should focus on adequacy of controls and audit trail as designed, testing to confirm proper operation, and definition of needed improvements.

Recommendation #22

SSA should ensure that the CDS security system is corrected to prevent improper logging off of the system.

The documentation for the CDS Security Access Control System (SACS) indicates that failure of an employee to log-off properly will result in that employee's security record remaining active in the system. When another employee subsequently logs on to the system, the system will erroneously record the second employee's work as being performed by the first employee. This circumvents the purpose of recording who is responsible for a transaction in the first place.

SSA should request that the CDS vendor be instructed to correct the deficiency, such that all methods of logging off of CDS result in termination of the active security record.

Recommendation #23

SSA should develop and document security profiles for each employee classification which specify what access will be granted to all systems.

The CDS SACS provides the capability to control access to files and system functions on a user-by-user basis. Currently, the security administrator develops a profile for each person newly assigned to a position requiring access to the system. This is done by copying a security profile for a person in a similar, but often not identical, position. The security administrator informed us that

she recognizes that this is not the best approach but that staffing shortages have prevented improvement.

SSA could improve its security administration by developing a clear rationale for which positions should be granted what access to data and functions. This rationale should be documented and used as the basis to develop profiles by position.



SECTION VI
MANAGEMENT

VI. MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses that portion of our study dealing with the overall management of the Social Services Agency. While management was originally not one of the primary areas identified for review, based on our Preliminary Review, it became fairly evident to the audit team that this was in fact, a major issue within SSA.

During our Preliminary Review we heard concerns such as:

- Communication mechanisms were lacking
- Administrative processes were cumbersome
- Leadership of SSA was not perceived as strong
- Relationships with the various community groups was viewed as being adversarial
- Personnel practices throughout SSA were viewed as being based on personal contacts

For purposes of this review, we defined management as having two components, leadership and administration. Good management is the healthy marriage of both skill sets. Broadly stated, good management occurs when both leadership and administration are appropriately placed within an organization. An organization may be structured with adequate resources, but without effective leadership and administrative approaches it may not perform as effectively as possible. Management is the tool by which an organization accomplishes its goals.

Leadership must direct the purpose and operations of an organization. Examples of what leadership provides include:

- A vision
- Inspiration of purpose, creation of a positive work environment, modelling by example, reinforcement of staff, and empowerment of others
- Guidance to the development and implementation of an approach whereby the vision permeates



throughout the organization and is incorporated into its daily operations

- Commitment to an investment in long range planning and innovative approaches
- Recognition of the need for, and the willingness to make mid-course corrections in style, structure, or processes to meet the changing environment

Administrative functions of management should support and complement the leadership functions. Examples of these are:

- Creation of a structure that supports the purpose of the organization and is flexible to meet changing needs or requirements
- Creation of a mechanism for accountability in production, performance, and controls
- Adoption of approaches that includes, accepts, and encourages, as part of the decision making process, input from employees, constituents, or community groups
- Creation of a work environment that fosters a team spirit and support for the work force at all levels including the involvement of the work force in the problem solving and planning processes
- Development of mechanisms for timely, ongoing, open, and effective communications to and between its employees, constituents, community groups, and control entities
- Investment in staff development to ensure adequate and effective services to constituents, and community

During the team's discussion in developing the final Scope of Work, it was determined that Management should be an area for review.

The objectives of our review were to:

- Assess the leadership within SSA in regards to policy, innovation, and creating a positive work environment
- Identify and analyze the effectiveness of SSA management practices regarding program operations
- Assess the efficiency of management's accountability procedures regarding SSA operations

The key action steps we undertook to complete our review were to:

- Interview executive staff, managers, rank and file, and community representatives
- Review SSA management structure, processes, practices, procedures, and documents
- Review the organizational structure of other counties to provide a basis for evaluating SSA's design and operations
- Observe operations

BACKGROUND

The Alameda County Social Services Agency management has faced a host of challenges over the years with a reduction in resources, coupled with the demand for increased services. This increase in the number of clients to be served has been accompanied by an increase in the number of clients with special needs. Alameda County is not alone or unique in this regard. The changes in state and federal requirements and their associated funds are impacting all of the counties throughout the state.

This changing environment impacts the management of the SSA's operations, both internally and externally. It impacts the:

- Roles and responsibilities of the organization
- Decision making process used by the organization
- Approach used for the planning and delivery of services

Historically, social services agencies were structured to respond to the requirements put upon them by the federal, state and local entities. These requirements were oftentimes very structured, governed by regulatory mandates, bureaucratic in nature, micro managed from the outside, and had a primary focus on ensuring compliance.

The management style at the Alameda County SSA has thus been one that has operated more focused internally on reacting to achieving compliance, processing functions, and requirements.

With the changing environment, some requirements have changed as well. Some of these new requirements now focus on ensuring coordination, consolidation, collaboration, and cooperation in regards to the delivery of services.

To date, the greatest impact is from the changing expectations on the part of all of the concerned entities affected by SSA. The Board of Supervisors expects an organization that will be innovative to meet the challenges facing them. The community expects responsiveness to the changes that impact on the services they receive and the employees expect a management structure that will provide them with the support required to deliver services.

Because of the changing environment, it is imperative that SSA do business differently. SSA must provide the leadership and administrative flexibility to manage the required changes and meet the continuing changing needs.

CURRENT ENVIRONMENT

During our review it became evident that the current status of SSA could best be described as an organization in turmoil. Throughout the organization there are staff and managers committed to providing service to those in need. Every day they face the increased need for services and the decrease in the resources available.

While we found an understanding within the organization of the changes and challenges facing SSA, we also found a high level of frustration with what is perceived as a lack of management investment in support mechanisms for staff.

We found a management that recognizes the challenges facing staff and have encouraged and supported staff appreciation activities throughout SSA, such as Staff Appreciation Day.

However, the overriding focus is on meeting the day-to-day crisis whatever it may be. It could be working with a client in immediate need, responding to a new mandate requiring more paper processing, or addressing concerns expressed by a community group.

SSA management is attempting to address the internal and external issues as best it can, given the current organizational structure and resources. This results in SSA operating in a survival mode reacting to whichever crisis requires immediate attention with little, if any, time devoted to properly plan or prepare for the future.

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

In this subsection, we present the issues which we identified during the course of our review. The issues are:

- There is not a commonly held vision of a social services delivery system
- The current SSA organizational structure no longer meets the needs of the County
- SSA leadership is perceived, both internally and externally, as lacking credibility
- SSA's relationships with the community, Board of Supervisors, employees, and other agencies need strengthening
- SSA's organization lacks effective administrative mechanisms
- SSA's planning and development functions are not adequately supported
- SSA has made a minimum investment in staff development or in community resource development
- SSA managers believe they have the responsibility for the delivery of services with little, if any, authority over the resources to provide the services



ISSUE #19

There is not a commonly held vision of a social services delivery system.

Condition

A Mission Statement was recently adopted by SSA. It represents more of a functional statement and would become more effective by being redesigned into a statement of purpose. In addition to the adopted Mission Statement, SSA adopted a Statement of Values which appear in Appendix A. The mission and values of SSA should be the framework from which the vision of a service delivery system is developed. A clear vision will assist SSA in meeting the needs of the clients, community, county, and staff in an efficient and effective manner. Having a functional Mission Statement does not mean that management within SSA does not take place. It means that management does not operate with a central focus, and direction which enhances and supports its overall purpose.

In fact, during the interviews of the rank and file employees, labor groups, community groups, administrators, and members of the Board of Supervisors, we asked specifically about the mission of SSA. We received a variety of responses, but the overall consistent theme was to "provide money to those in need." This narrow definition of purpose does not even accurately portray the full scope of responsibilities held by SSA.

Cause

The categorical funding mechanisms used by the State and federal governments has facilitated a fragmented approach to services and has supported a structure which is based on programs rather than on client service. As new programs have been added to SSA, they too were identified as separate entities. One of the reasons this fragmented approach is supported by many is because it is easier to meet the mandated accounting and reporting requirements in this manner.

Effect

The lack of an overall vision hampers effective decision making because:

- There is no standard to measure against when making decisions
- There is no single focus to guide planning
- There is no agreed upon goal, therefore alternatives cannot be developed



- There is no direction to guide how decisions will contribute to or detract from building on or attaining the vision
- There is no framework by which to judge appropriateness or significance of actions

The result is the continued stratification of isolated programs which are costly to administer and probably waste precious resources in creating duplicative processes for staff and clients.

ISSUE #20

The current SSA organizational structure no longer meets the needs of the County.

Condition

The SSA Director modified the organization structure. This change was successful in consolidating the number of individuals and functions reporting directly to the Director.

Exhibit VI-1 depicts the current organizational structure. As can be seen there are eight direct reporting entities:

- Economic Benefits
- Management Services
- Human Services
- Employment Programs
- Aging
- Personnel
- Administrative Support
- Secretary

The current organization structure results in operations being conducted in a fragmented manner. As a framework, it does not promote cooperation and coordination of services to meet the needs and expectations of the clients and community. While there are weekly executive staff meetings to discuss issues and efforts throughout the organization, the structure operates in islands of autonomy and results in a less than effective service delivery system.

Due to the changing environment affecting the services and the manner in which they need to be delivered, the existing structure cannot support the needed coordination and creativity in addressing the allocation of scarce resources because of its fragmentation.

EXHIBIT VI-1

BUDGET UNIT

BUDGETED POSITIONS

349	4 00
350	752 24
351	459 48
352	219 04
355	25 33
356	67 34
357	28 00
359	10 33

Dept
Total

1,565 76

Page 25.1

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY
AGENCY OVERVIEW SHEET

Function & Organization Chart
Date: September 1, 1990

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

- Provide Economic Benefits, Human Services, Services to Seniors, Employment and Refugee Services for all eligible County residents

1 — Director, Social Services Agency

SOCIAL SERVICES
COMMISSION

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

1 — Admin. Assistant (SSA)
1 — Social Services Agency Planner

SECRETARIAL

1 — Admin. Secretary

PERSONNEL (352)

1 — Senior Dept. Personnel Officer
3 — Dept. Personnel Officer (.75 unfunded)
1 — Admin. Services Ass't
1 — Supervising Secretary II
1 — Personnel Tech.
3.83 — Payroll Records Clerk
3 — Clerk II (1 unfunded)
2 — Specialist Clerk
1 — Supv. Clerk I

DEPARTMENT ON AGING (359)

Refer to Page 25 17

10.33 Budgeted Positions

ECONOMIC BENEFITS DEPARTMENT (350)

Refer to Pages 25.2 through 25.6

752.24 Budgeted Positions

MANAGEMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT (352)

Refer to Pages 25.7 through 25.8

219.04 Budgeted Positions

HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT (351/357)

Refer to Pages 25.11 through 25.15

487.48 Budgeted Positions

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS (355/356)

Refer to Page 25 18

92.67 Budgeted Positions

Cause

Historically, the organizational structure has been designed in response to changes in mandates. SSA has been organized to respond to program designs, funding sources and to assist in tracking information and responding to the various mandates from the federal and state levels.

Effect

The structure is not client and community focused. When community and labor groups have a concern, they must first identify which of the program areas is the one that has the responsibility to address their specific concern. Then they must contact the individual responsible for that organizational area. Those individuals who have been involved with SSA for some time, understand the process, the organizational structure, and know the persons to contact. Someone inexperienced with this structure has great difficulty in knowing who to contact or understanding the protocol and process to be used.

Probably the greatest inadequacy of the current structure is that it does not support the Director in pursuing required leadership activities.

ISSUE #21**SSA leadership is perceived as lacking credibility****Condition**

SSA leadership is viewed as exclusive rather than inclusive in its decision making process. Most community and labor groups interviewed stated that SSA's management is unresponsive to their ideas and/or concerns. Furthermore, they stated that SSA communicates with them only when directed by the Board of Supervisors to do so. The community groups indicated that on some major issues they are provided little advance notice on proposed changes and receive inadequate information to evaluate in order to provide meaningful input into the decision making process. An example of this is the recently adopted Vendor Pay Program which requires an Ordinance change. The Board of Supervisors delayed the decision until the community groups were given an opportunity to review the proposed changes. This resulted from complaints to the Board by community groups of their lack of involvement in the review process.

Most SSA line staff interviewed expressed concern with their lack of involvement in the decision making process. Staff indicated that decisions are made "somewhere



way above them and far away". Many feel shut out of the process due to the perceived lack of encouragement and interest on the part of management.

One employee indicated that she had in fact offered suggestions for potential improvements in the operations of the program. Her perspective is that while her supervisor was receptive and supportive, there was no mechanism for feedback to occur once the suggestion went "up".

Another employee stated that in the beginning he attempted to participate in improving the existing processing procedures. After numerous attempts with no results, he concluded that the management of SSA was really not interested.

SSA management is viewed as a distant group to most of the employees. Staff identified more with their program functional unit than with SSA as a whole.

Cause

The fast changing environment has dictated a management focus of reacting to a situation, and decision making with little time for extensive discussions and communications. Participation is viewed as a time consuming luxury because priority is given to the daily issues and decisions facing the organization. This results in continuing its "exclusive" management approach in which a group of key individuals influence most decisions.

Effect

This is resulting in a perceived division of a "them" and "us" between SSA and the community and between SSA management and the employees. Cooperation becomes more and more difficult because there is little belief that SSA is willing to accept input or provide substantial information.

There exists feelings of frustration and isolation at all levels. Frustration on the part of management because in most instances, they have only enough time to react to circumstance, and not adequate time to include broad-based participation in decision making. Community groups feel frustrated because they feel they could be of assistance if allowed to participate. Employees feel frustrated because they do not feel part of the process. Frustration is felt on the part of the Board of Supervisors because they do not feel comfortable in making policy decisions without broad-based concurrence or at least review.

ISSUE #22

SSA's relationships with the community, the Board of Supervisors, employees, and other agencies need strengthening.

Condition

Relationships between SSA and other entities are suffering. SSA is viewed as:

- Inaccessible
- Unwilling to change
- Unwilling to accept input
- Unwilling to be innovative
- Unresponsive to client and community concerns

Roles and relationships that should be viewed as complementary are perceived as adversarial.

Community groups and concerned individuals express their concerns about SSA directly to the Board. The Board is placed in a position to balance the decisions, issues, and relationships when making difficult decisions.

Employees feel isolated or estranged from SSA management as indicated before. When asked for a rating on the effectiveness of management, most of the employees indicated that they were unable to respond because they do not know or relate with management.

The changing environment is dictating the need for greater communication and coordination in meeting the needs of the clients served. There are other agencies that provide services to some of the same clients being served by SSA. There is currently no formal structure or relationship to coordinate these services. An example of this is in the area of Aging and Adult Services. Many of these clients also receive services from health programs administered by the Health Care Services Agency.

Cause

SSA's current status of questionable relationships has evolved over a period of time. The organization structure and approaches used have been one of a reactive nature. This has not allowed for the investment in relationships or an overall review of the needed changes to enhance the current status.



Effect

There is a lack of credibility in the decision making process. What is officially communicated both internally and externally by SSA is being evaluated with the premise that it is either not the entire story or that it is hiding something.

While SSA may have the facts and analysis to substantiate and support a decision, due to their lack of credibility based on poor relationships, they are sometimes ineffective. This impacts on the clients served, the community and the employees.

ISSUE #23**SSA organization lacks effective administrative mechanisms.****Condition**

SSA does not have effective methods in place to carry out its management responsibilities. The areas we assessed were the processes used in communications, and accountability practices in the personnel evaluation process.

In the area of communications we found that the executive staff meet weekly and there is the expectation that information discussed will be disseminated throughout the organization. There are memos that are distributed throughout the organization that address organization wide issues. For example, during the course of our fieldwork there were numerous memos regarding the asbestos removal and construction work being performed on the 401 Broadway building site.

There is a varying level of staff meetings and program specific information provided throughout the organization. Employees stated that they were informed of policy, program or process changes sometimes on the day of the change or even after the effective date of the change. The mechanism used for this communication was a memo describing the change that was handed out by the supervisor accompanied by a verbal explanation. One of the informal communication mechanisms we heard used throughout the various program areas was "the grapevine". Employees stated that oftentimes they heard of upcoming program changes through the grapevine prior to hearing it from their supervisor. At times it is this informal process that triggers the supervisor to ask and obtain information.



In asking employees how effective and complete the information regarding program changes is, their response varied. For some of the smaller program units some indicated that they received complete and timely information. For the most part, we received responses indicating that staff did not feel they received effective communications in a timely manner.

The team was told on numerous occasions that most often employees discuss issues or program changes among themselves to ensure that there is consistency in the interpretation. The reason given for this was that they felt they receive more support and information from their peers than from their supervisors

In the area of accountability practices we reviewed the process used in the Personnel area. This included the processes for evaluating employees and managers performance and the processes used in promotions.

The SSA Administrative Rules and Procedures Manual, Section 3-2.05 discusses the evaluation process and prescribes by category of employee when evaluations must be completed.

In the area of performance evaluations we found very few SSA employees, be they rank and file or at a management level, who had received timely evaluations. The responses ranged from those who had received an evaluation annually to some who had gone literally years without one even though they might have changed positions.

One employee who had received fairly regular performance evaluations stated that she did not put much credibility in the information contained in the evaluations because everyone in the unit received the same comments. In addition, she felt that the forms used did not address the pertinent aspects of their functions.

While there is a recognition on the part of management of the need for and the benefit of employee evaluations, when compared to the priority of service delivery, holding managers accountable for conducting performance evaluations has not been high on the priority list

In the area of promotions and the personnel practices used, there was concern expressed by employees and labor groups alike. The consensus is that the processes

used and the opportunities for upward mobility are perceived to be based on a personal contact system rather than on a civil service system. There is a belief or perception that historically the promotional opportunities are limited to those "anointed" by management.

We found a high level of frustration with the processes used and the time required to process personnel actions. This is due, in part, to the amount of time required to comply with civil service rules and the required coordination with the County personnel staff.

We found no formal grievances filed by employees relating to any specific promotional opportunity but we did hear there had been inquiries over the telephone regarding the processes used in promotions.

There were concerns expressed regarding the approach used with the Bilingual Positions when it comes to promotions or laterals. SSA has designated certain positions as Bilingual Positions. There were examples of staff wishing to promote or accept a lateral position who were told that there is a policy that they can leave their position only when a replacement has been identified. The bilingual staff feel that they do not have the same access to promotions as other SSA staff have.

Because of this and the large caseload for Bilingual Positions, there are now bilingual staff requesting SSA to remove their bilingual designation.

Cause

The focus on the daily issues rather than a focus on the broader and long-term have dictated establishing effective mechanisms as a low priority.

Effect

Focusing on and reacting to daily needs results in a lack of time and effort devoted to open communications throughout the organization. This results in having the informal system forming conclusions which may not be factual.

An example of a result of not having supportive organizational mechanisms are the informal systems set up by employees such as card files to support them in performing their job functions. These informal systems provide them with information they need, a feeling that they have control over the information, and promotes the belief that they know and understand more of the specific program information than their supervisor.



Employees and community groups perceive the personnel processes as being less than credible. In addition, the resource pool from which to promote is smaller than it could be due to this perception. This also results in the perception that management can not be trusted to promote truly based on merit.

Management can not completely evaluate the effectiveness of the organizational performance because of the lack of these mechanisms.

ISSUE #24

SSA's planning and development functions are not adequately supported.

Condition

Currently there is only one position with the designation of SSA Planner reporting directly to the SSA Director.

Members of the Board of Supervisors and community expressed frustration with the lack of innovation and creativity in proposed approaches addressing the changing needs in the area of social services. Proposals brought forward for consideration are consistent with "doing business as usual" without the perceived recognition of the need for changing approaches.

The organizational structure has been focused more towards addressing the current issues than focusing on the longer term planning and development functions.

Cause

This evolution is due in part to the declining resources over the years. As decisions have been made, the trade-offs have been direct service versus planning. In addition, there is a perception that resources spent on "administrative" types of positions are in lieu of providing direct services.

Effect

Competing priorities for resources have resulted in the primary focus of the organization to not include planning and development. This results in an inability for SSA to be innovative and responsive to the changing environment.



ISSUE #25

SSA has made a minimum investment in staff development or in community resource development.

Condition

There are a variety of community groups interested and involved with the services of SSA. Those we interviewed expressed a willingness to work with SSA in addressing its issues. The community and labor groups represent a resource that can be used in a team effort to address the issues. They provide a mechanism for SSA to maximize and leverage the use of their limited resources.

In the area of staff resources, at one time there was a formal unit dedicated to staff development and training activities. The prior SSA administration reduced the resources dedicated to these functions because of funding cutbacks. There was a higher priority on direct service delivery than on what are viewed as administrative functions.

Currently the Program Support Unit provides staff training and program support information such as procedures clarification and maintain the program procedures manuals. The budget cutbacks over the years have resulted in a staff of four to provide these services to the GA, AFDC, Medi-Cal programs and Food Stamps.

There is another position in this unit that supports other training and orientation programs such as Affirmative Action, cultural awareness, and the recent Motivating Positive Performance course. Some of these training efforts are performed in conjunction with the SSA Personnel Office.

Consequently, the Human Services functions must provide staff training and support without dedicated Program Specialists. Training occurs in these areas but it is inadequate to meet the needs of the programs.

Even the training provided by the Program Specialists is at times inadequate because of the limited time and resources available to them. Staff indicated to us that they received inadequate training and preparation prior to being assigned a caseload. Others indicated that while they might have received some training, it was not applicable to the assignment they received.

Lack of adequate staff training greatly impacts the bilingual staff in designated Bilingual Positions. Without a trained pool of staff that can rotate in to cover positions,

those staff often return from vacations or sick leave to find that their caseloads have been left as uncovered caseloads. In other words, no one has been assigned to do their work during their absence.

During the period of August 1990 to August 1991, there were 170 employees that left SSA for a variety of reasons. During this same time period there were 143 employees hired or reinstated to SSA. These numbers do not include the number of transfers that occurred within SSA. This represents a relatively high number of individuals requiring training in order to deliver services.

Other training services are provided by the County's Personnel and Labor Relations Department. These are training services and classes offered county-wide to all of the county office, departments, and agencies. We were told that SSA staff do actively participate in these courses. These courses cover topics designed to address county wide organizational issues such as Supervisory and Management Skills Training as well as Gender and Multi-cultural Issues Training.

Cause

Historically there has been a view that addressing SSA issues was strictly the responsibility of SSA and therefore, community involvement has been limited. Part of this is also due to the poor relationship SSA experiences with the various community groups.

The current management recognizes the need for and the benefits of training and staff development. The difficulty has been the continued challenges associated with budget constraints and competing priorities. These competing priorities of direct services which are viewed as essential or mandated activities versus administrative support activities perceived as "luxuries". Since the trend to reduce the focus on staff development and training began years ago, it will also take time to turn this around.

Effect

The minimum investment in the area of staff and community resources results in:

- A lack of maximizing and leveraging dollars and resources
- Staff inadequately prepared to meet their functional responsibilities

- Turnover of some staff that might otherwise remain at SSA
- Staff perception of limited promotional opportunities

ISSUE #26

SSA managers believe they have the responsibility for the delivery of services with little, if any, authority over the resources to provide services.

Condition

We heard a consistent comment from the supervisor level to the management level that they were expected to deliver services and comply with mandates but felt they had little, if any, control or say over the use of resources. The example cited over and over again was the inability to fill vacant positions. In addition, due to the continued cutbacks in funding, other supportive activities such as outside training was limited.

Cause

The continued budget and funding constraints have required a change in the approach used in resource allocation throughout SSA. This affects access to staff positions, training resources, and equipment resources. Due to the reality of reduced dollars, the expectation of management is that the operations remain within those given parameters through reducing spending rather than through innovative approaches.

Managers provide input during the budget process, but there seems to be a breakdown when it comes to the communicating as to what is left after the budget is approved, as well as how to access these resources. While the budget may show authorized positions, because of the lack of revenues approved, the positions cannot be filled without over spending. Oftentimes the information used by managers does not account for these revenue constraints.

The decision making process at the executive level is based on the minimal dollars available and prioritizing the needs of all areas. There is a lack of understanding throughout SSA of the decision making process required to address the broader issue of the utilization of scarce resources.

Effect

The lack of communications on the fiscal matters results in the perception throughout the organization that there are more resources available than there really are. Also, in a belief that funds are being wasted which could better be spent in support of the program operations.

Due to the belief on the part of the supervisors and managers that they lack control over their budgeted resources, they exercise little oversight and accountability over the program operations.

CONCLUSIONS

SSA has an opportunity to implement change in its organizational structure and management style to demonstrate its ability to meet the changing needs and position itself for the future.

- **The current SSA organizational structure does not maximize current resources**

The organizational structure is an inherent part of the overall management of SSA. Even though some changes have been made that take SSA in the right direction, it remains in a "doing business as usual" configuration with many islands of autonomy.

- **The lack of a vision and investment in long-range planning negatively impact the effectiveness of SSA**

Strong leadership needs to be demonstrated in providing a vision and a long-term direction to SSA. The unavailability of dedicated resources to the long term planning activities have resulted in an organization unprepared for the future. This impacts on the ability to respond externally to the community concerns and internally to the employee concerns.

- **The management mechanisms provide little support to the organization**

To effectively implement change in the organizational structure, there must be a consistent change in the management mechanisms to support it on a daily basis. The historical approaches no longer address the needs of the community or the employees, demonstrated by the lack of credibility SSA experiences. The management framework within which

the organization operates must address:

- .. the access to and participation in the decision making process
- .. open communications
- .. investment in the development and utilization of staff and community resources
- .. ongoing evaluations of the effectiveness of the organization in meeting its mission

The result of all of this is an agency with committed staff and energy to face the future but lacking mechanisms to allow it to effectively plan for that future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following constitute our recommendations for enhancing the management of SSA.

- SSA management should develop a vision, strategic plan, and direction for SSA
- SSA should reorganize its programs and structure
- SSA management should improve internal and external relationships
- SSA management should enhance the existing administrative mechanisms

Recommendation #24

SSA management should develop a vision, strategic plan, and direction for SSA

A positive step was taken in the adoption of a Mission Statement for SSA, even though it is functionally oriented. What is still needed is a vision that is strategic and focused on the long term. The County of Alameda has already adopted a Mission Statement which is Exhibit VI-2. This adopted Mission Statement addresses the priority of client services. SSA should revise theirs based on a vision that is complementary and consistent with the County Mission Statement.

The development of a mission statement should be done in concert with all affected and interested parties. Community outreach efforts are essential during this process to clearly demonstrate the commitment to do business differently.

The Mission Statement is the first and most critical step in establishing the direction for SSA. The next step is a

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA
Mission Statement

***THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF
ALAMEDA COUNTY, THROUGH
THE DEDICATION OF ITS
EMPLOYEES, IS COMMITTED TO
SERVE THE NEEDS OF THE
COMMUNITY AND TO ENHANCE
THE QUALITY OF LIFE.***

strategic plan based on a vision of how to approach achieving its mission. The strategic plan identifies specific goals and objectives. The establishment of specific goals and objectives will assist SSA in identifying necessary mechanisms to monitor progress. SSA leadership can also use a strategic plan in identifying necessary policy issues to be assessed, analyzed, and presented for consideration to the community and the Board of Supervisors.

Recommendation #25

SSA should reorganize its programs and structure

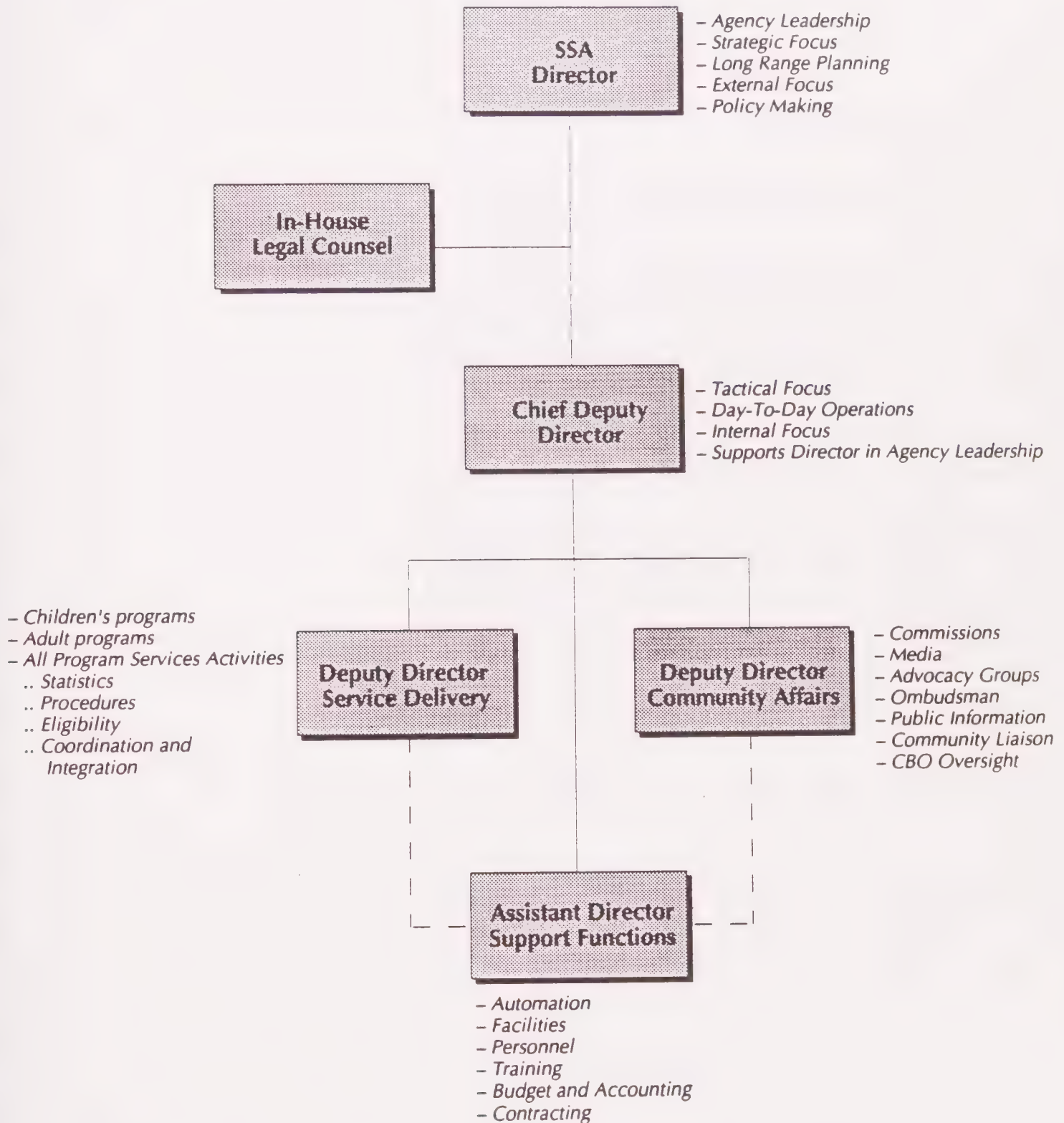
In an organization as large and complex as SSA, making organizational changes requires a major effort. There are constraints and considerations that require study and review prior to any detailed implementation of a substantive change. The concept presented in Exhibit VI-3 is purposely designed at a high level understanding that there are many variables that will require extensive review. Implementation of this concept into a more detailed organizational structure requires a focus and accommodation that only executive management can provide.

The consolidation steps already taken relating to the organizational structure represent positive action. We believe a further step needs to be taken. We believe this structure offers at the highest level a significant change to the historical approaches taken by SSA. This proposed organizational structure communicates distinctly that this is an agency committed to services and the community.

The organizational structure is the mechanism required to achieve the vision. Both the vision and the organizational structure must be client focused. The proposed organizational structure was developed to achieve some specific management objectives. We wanted an organizational structure that would:

- Demonstrate a high commitment to a client focused delivery system
- Communicate a message that leadership is in charge and committed to doing business differently

PROPOSED SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY REORGANIZATION



- Demonstrate a high commitment to the importance of the community it serves
- Maximize the opportunities brought about by AB948, the Realignment Bill
- Maximize the use of resources
- Be committed to the further development of its personnel resources
- Be dependent on shared responsibility and ownership with the community it serves

In a recent article in *Fortune* magazine entitled "The Bureaucracy Busters" there is a discussion that supports our recommendation. The conclusions are that many existing organizational structures no longer meet the changing needs facing management. Organizational structures must be based on the purpose, vision and tasks of the organization and a better use of employee creativity.

In the article Raymond Miles, a management professor at Berkeley, discusses the importance of an "adaptive organization" and the need for an organizational structure that is fluid. In other words, the organizational structure must retain flexibility to meet the changing needs and the changing environment.

In summary we believe this organizational structure provides for this needed flexibility and demonstrates the commitment to the clients, community, and employees.

We will address each of the specific "boxes" on the chart to explain the benefit this approach affords.

SSA Director

The structure provides support for the Director to focus on providing agency leadership. Although the Director retains ultimate authority and responsibility for SSA as a whole, creating a Chief Deputy Director position responsible for the day-to-day operations of SSA, provides the opportunity for the director to focus attention to leadership activities. Without a Chief Deputy position, the director has been attempting to perform both the leadership and daily operational role. The Director can

provide greater leadership through strategic focus on:

- Planning
- Community involvement
- Policy making

In essence, the SSA Director should be focusing on where SSA is going and deal with the external relationships that are important to SSA and the County. For example, the Director should be focused on seeking more State and Federal support and to be negotiating for pilot projects for SSA that will bring more funds into SSA to better serve clients.

Chief Deputy Director

This position will have the responsibility for the day to day operations. In contrast, to the Director whose focus will be external, his or her focus will be internal and will provide the tactical perspective. This position will provide direct support to the Director's leadership activities. This position will have three direct reports, two Deputy Directors and an Assistant Director. This consolidation provides for resource allocation decisions based on a cooperative and coordinated approach. This will be a benefit to the employees who will receive greater management support and improved communications because this position will focus on internal operations.

Deputy Director Service Delivery

This position will have the responsibility for *ALL* of the direct services provided by SSA. This will include:

- Children's programs
- Adult program
- All program activities in support of the delivery of services and reporting requirements

The requirement of coordinated and cooperative approaches in the area of service delivery supports this approach. It places the responsibility for this coordination and cooperation in one position as opposed to four. Resolution of issues and efficiencies of operations including resource allocation decisions can be better achieved by this approach.

Deputy Director Community Affairs

This position will demonstrate the importance of the community to the operations of SSA. It will have the

responsibility for:

- Community outreach
- Commissions
- Media
- Liaison with advocacy and community groups
- Ombudsman
- Public information
- CBO oversight

This will facilitate access to the organization which up to now has been viewed as somewhat difficult. This position will be responsible for building good relationships between the Agency and the community at large.

Assistant Director Support Functions

This position will have the responsibility for the remaining support functions such as:

- Automation
- Facilities
- Personnel
- Training
- Budgeting and Accounting
- Contracting

This approach should help to build an improved agency infrastructure by providing a single focus for support functions. These areas will benefit from a consolidation in its reporting, in a similar manner as the program services functions, in improving the cooperation and coordination efforts. A single point of focus for these functions will assist SSA as a whole when making the resource decisions relating to the increased use of automation, coordinated training programs, and consistently applied personnel practices.

In-House Legal Counsel

There has not been a legal position in SSA since the 1960's. The major changes that are currently facing SSA with realignment necessitate dedicated resources to address the legal issues. In addition, there are a multitude of legal questions arising through daily operations and there is a need to have legal resources that can assist the Director in developing the strategic long range approach and address daily issues.

Recommendation #26**SSA management should improve internal and external relationships**

If the organization is to be restructured, it will represent an opportunity to implement this recommendation. Through the effective design and utilization of community outreach programs, public information programs, liaison efforts with community groups and commissions, SSA can demonstrate its commitment to these vital relationships and begin changing the attitude currently held.

In addition, the use of innovative and open approaches will communicate to the Board of Supervisors that SSA management and leadership is not just being responsive but demonstrating a proactive approach.

Working with the CAO's office to identify additional resources that can be used to support the development of staff resources will communicate to SSA staff that management is committed to once again invest in them as a valuable resource.

Working with the community groups to identify approaches to problem solving will demonstrate a commitment to maximizing and leveraging resources.

Recommendation #27**SSA management should enhance the existing administrative mechanisms**

One of the initial requirements for the Chief Deputy should be to review the allocation of resources. In light of the reorganization, there should be support for an increased focus on administrative mechanisms.

Communications processes throughout the organization should be designed to be inclusive and on an ongoing basis. Consideration should be given to the development of regular employee meetings at the various facilities. These may need to be held more often at first and maybe designed for quarterly or semi-annually in the long term.

Direction and follow-up are needed to ensure the mechanisms for evaluating the performance of employees and the organization as a whole are not just an activity to be completed but are meaningful and effective because they are used by management in the decision making process.

FISCAL CONTROLS

The Project Task Force requested that we include as part of the review of management, a Fiscal Controls Review. This Fiscal Controls Review included a review of the Public Guardian's office and the procedures used in the Fiscal Management Department.

Due to the nature of this type of review, we have included the issues discussion with the specific recommendations in this section.

**PUBLIC GUARDIAN'S
OFFICE****ISSUE #27****Cash accounts are not reconciled on a timely basis**

The primary operating account of the Public Guardian/Conservator's Office (PG/C) has not been reconciled since July 1989.

If cash accounts are not reconciled on a timely basis it is not possible to detect fraud or errors in a timely manner.

Recommendation #28

All trust and bank accounts should be reconciled monthly.

ISSUE #28**Unapportioned interest on individual conservatees' accounts is delayed in its posting**

Quarterly posting of earned interest was last accomplished for the quarter ended 09/30/1990.

According to PG/C staff the quarterly posting has not been done due to an error in the software used to calculate and allocate earned interest. The software is maintained by Pacific Western Information Systems (PWIS).

The delay in posting interest may result in misallocation of future interest (i.e., closed accounts do not get credited for earned interest), thereby causing a potential material understatement of the conservatees' account and the concomitant misstatement of court accounting and/or conservatees' trial balance.



Recommendation #29

SSA should follow-up the correction of the software with PWIS immediately so that interest due to conservatees can be apportioned to individual accounts on a timely basis.

ISSUE #29

Written procedures for processing and reporting annual and/or final court accountings are lacking

There is an absence of procedures for the processing and reporting of annual and/or final court accountings. Currently, the court accounting is being done on an ad hoc basis.

Because of this condition the final and/or annual court accountings have been inaccurate and prepared on an untimely basis

Recommendation #30

The County should develop written procedures for processing and reporting annual and/or final court accountings.

Such procedures should document control objectives and techniques, provide for separation of key duties such as authorizing, recording and reviewing transactions, clearly delineate lines of personal responsibility, including qualified and continuous supervision of approved procedures, and address both the limited direct physical and indirect access to resources through the preparation or processing of documents that authorize the use or disposition of resources.

ISSUE #30

Separation of duties in the Public Guardian/ Conservator's office are inadequate

There is a lack of separation of duties in the PG/C Office. The accounting supervisor also acts as the system's administrator of the Public Guardian's CompuTrust accounting system. The reconciliation of trust and bank accounts is also her responsibility.

Because of this condition, unauthorized disbursements from the conservatee's accounts by the accounting supervisor would not be detected. Thus, the lack of separation of duties provides an increased risk of fraud.



Recommendation #31

SSA should either reassign the system administration functions to a different individual or reassign the responsibility for reconciling the trust and bank accounts.

ISSUE #31

Controls over disbursements in the Public Guardian/Conservator's Office need improvement

There is a lack of control over disbursements in the Public Guardian/Conservator's Office.

When disbursements designated for client pick-up are ready, they are taken from the PG/C Office to 401 Broadway by an available account clerk. While being held for pick-up, the disbursements are not controlled.

Because of this condition checks may be lost or stolen without being detected. Thus, increasing the risk of fraud and misuse of county resources.

Recommendation #32

SSA should establish a policy whereby checks are mailed only.

If such a policy is impracticable and/or causes undue financial hardship then procedures should be established which require logging checks out of the PG/C and into the waiting area where the food stamps are distributed at 401 Broadway. Supervisory personnel in the Economic Benefits department should be assigned the responsibility of logging in checks.

ISSUE #32

Accounts payable are not recorded on a timely basis

Accounts payable bills are not recorded on a timely basis.

Currently, when bills are received they are forwarded to the investigator who handles the case for review and approval before they are forwarded to the Accounting department for input and processing. Such a process increases the probability of duplicate payment.

Recommendation #33

All bills should be input as they are received.

Furthermore, on a weekly basis an "accounts payable" listing should be prepared for investigators to review. After review and approval of the bill the investigator will return the annotated list to the accounting department for payment processing.

**FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT
DEPARTMENT**

ISSUE #33

Duties in the Financial Management Department need improvement

There is a lack of separation of duties related to the replacement warrant process in the Fiscal Management Department. The Account Clerk II verifies whether the claimed missing warrant is paid or outstanding, initiates the stop payment process, initiates the replacement warrant process, and pulls replacement warrants, and issues those designated as held for pick-up.

Because of this condition, there is an increased opportunity to conceal errors and/or irregularities, which may permit such errors or irregularities to go undetected.

Recommendation #34

The responsibility for initiation of replacement warrants should be separate from the issuance of the replacement warrants if possible.

ISSUE #34

There is a lack of documentation for the simulated claim

Written procedures do not exist for the completion of the State administrative expenditure claim. Furthermore, no documentation exists for the simulated claim SSA uses for decision-making.

The State Administrative Claim is the basis for reimbursement of actual costs incurred by the County. The Fiscal Manual Regulations Section 25-200.8 (January 1, 1977) states, "Appropriate staff in each county shall be cognizant of the regulations, rules and requirements contained in this manual and shall employ administrative techniques to assure that performance of fiscal functions is consistent with such requirements." Adequate written procedures reduce the possibility of errors in the completion of the State administrative expenditure claim and the simulated claim.

Recommendation #35

SSA should develop written policies and procedures for preparation of the State administrative expenditure claim and the simulated claim.

The documentation for the simulated claim should include a detailed explanation of the logic of the claim model and how to properly prepare the claim. In addition, the procedures should address the systematic backup of the simulated claim model.

SECTION VII
AGENCY ACTION PLAN

VII. AGENCY ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Agency Action Plan is based on the recommendations contained within the Final Report and predicated upon certain factors. These factors included assumptions about priorities, investment, commitment, and timelines. The Agency Action Plan purposely includes policy actions required of the Board of Supervisors.

A major assumption is that the Board of Supervisors are interested in having SSA become a more efficient and effective organization. To accomplish this would demand the Supervisor's time to understand the complexities of current program requirements super-imposed by external entities as well as those self-imposed by the County. They then must agree on the priorities of services to be provided by SSA. This step requires fortitude, dedication, and a great deal of risk taking. It will demand that tough choices be made concerning which policies, practice, regulations, and even mandates need to be challenged. These challenges may even require dialog and interfacing with federal, State, and/or community groups in order to engender the necessary cooperation to adjust, amend, or even eliminate the current service levels or approaches utilized in delivering services.

Beyond the programs, the Board of Supervisors must address areas such as local personnel policies which if followed according to current practices could be a barrier as great, if not greater, than those related to program requirements. Personnel practices must be reassessed to ensure that new, fresh, and different perspectives are held by the leadership of SSA. This required perspective must guide the development of new approaches to management within SSA. These personnel arrangements may require the Board of Supervisors to negotiate with employee organizations to get their agreement and buy-in to do business differently.

The most significant area requiring commitment is that of fiscal investment. The required fiscal investment will be sizeable and long-term in nature. This includes a commitment to:

- Authorizing new hires
- Training current staff
- Automating most labor intensive functions
- Conducting a series of reviews of specific programs and/or functions to identify required changes in operations
- Setting up pilot projects of new program and management approaches
- Providing support for the many necessary processes which will ensure community concurrence and participation in the policy making process

After the Board of Supervisors set the policies to guide the overall direction and priorities for SSA, the actual implementation of change, from the leadership instilling vision and hope, to the development of actual operating approaches, is the responsibility of SSA. The SSA leadership with the County Administrator and County staff need to identify current procedures which create barriers to the timely implementation of change-oriented decisions. These could affect personnel testing, hiring, and/or training. They also could affect data processing, facilities, or just involve the setting up of cooperative arrangements with other departments within the County to facilitate the development of "barrier reduction" strategies.

The Board of Supervisors could consider creating an Executive Administrative Advisory Committee (EAAC) to serve as an administrative liaison group between the Board and SSA. The EAAC should consist of senior administrators from County agencies who have established records of excellence.

The liaison function served by the committee would be like technical advisors to SSA on how to approach policy development, strategic planning, alternatives identification for requirements specific to Alameda County policies and procedures. This committee could address itself to "barrier reduction" strategies and would have only an administrative focus. This committee would report to the Board on a regular basis.



Key to all action strategies is community participation. Community groups should be involved on a representative basis in all of SSA's development efforts. These involved community groups, be they advocates or providers, must assume a posture of responsibility for how SSA operates. They must develop realistic expectations, commit to assisting in the creation of new and needed approaches, become spokespersons for what they assist in creating, and strengthen ongoing relationships throughout the community network towards SSA's development efforts.

Positive and supportive community participation can only occur when the leadership within SSA commits to the following approach with all community groups:

- Encouraging open communications
- Assigning meaningful roles
- Establishing respectful relationships
- Engendering respect among all participants
- Leading through example, not explanation

This mode of operating must filter throughout the Agency before SSA can expect to establish its credibility and thus gain support for the difficult and complex responsibilities it must carry out.

This Action Plan identifies the major activities which must occur in order to ensure that SSA will become efficient and effective in providing services to Alameda County.

THE MECHANISM

The Agency Action Plan identifies major required activities as well as a related subset of activities. The major activities are high level in focus while their respective subsets emanate from the specific areas included in the performance audit.

We have developed a rating system for each of the activities. An overall presentation of the major activities with a priority designation is depicted in Exhibit VII-1.

All activities are important to the SSA redesign and the ranking designated for each is related either to logical sequence, authority to control, fiscal cost-benefit implications and/or high profile aspect of activity. A High rating is given to those activities which should be



immediately acted upon either because of urgency, ease of implementation or as a necessary step in a logical sequence of events. A Medium designation is given to those activities which most often logically follow activities with a High designation or are not necessarily urgent, or represent the best use of limited resources. A Low designation most often is given to activities which are procedural, take minimal resources and are not related to policy formulation.

Major activities may have Medium or Low designations while some activities within the subset may have a High designation. This may reflect that, within the broad scope, the major activity may not be urgent, but when it is acted upon, an activity within the subset is very critical to its implementation.

The Agency Action Plan is presented in a format which identifies the **Activity** (what needs to be accomplished), the **Recommendation Addressed** (cross-referenced to Recommendations in the Final Report), the **Priority** (a ranking designation), the **Organizational Focus** (what organizational area the activity addresses), the **Responsible Entity** (who holds primary responsibility to ensure that the Activity is accomplished), the **Implementation Mechanism** (a suggested approach for accomplishing the Activity), and the **Completion Timeframe** (an estimate of the time required to complete the identified Activity).

The recommended Agency Action Plan is presented in Exhibit VII-2.



MAJOR ACTIVITY RATING

RANKING	ACTIVITY	PRIORITY
1	Decision to Redirect SSA	High
2	Establish Executive Administrative Advisory Committee	High
3	Identify Priorities for SSA	High
4	Develop Mission Statement/Statement of Values	High
5	Recommend SSA Detailed Organizational Structure	High
6	Identify Administrative Barriers (Related to Structure or Priorities)	High
7	Develop and Initiate Strategies to Eliminate Barriers	High
8	Implement New Organizational Structure	High
9	Establish Monthly Communications Tool for SSA Redesign (should relate status to all interested parties)	High
10	Develop SSA Strategic Plan	High
11	Implement Strategic Plan	Medium
12	Develop Procedures and Performance Standards	Low

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Decision to Redirect SSA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to adopting a revised organizational structure; if not the one proposed in this report, a modification thereof 	#24	High	County Policy	Board of Supervisors	Adopt Final Report	Within 30 Days
	#25, #14	High	County Policy	Board of Supervisors	Board Resolution	Within 45 Days
Establish Executive Administrative Advisory Committee	#24	High	SSA Planning	Board of Supervisors	Appoint Administrators from Various County Agencies	Within 45 Days
Identify Priorities for SSA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiating a formal participatory-driven strategic planning process involving all stakeholder groups in the community with the objective of radically redesigning the GA program's mission, goals and objectives Applying essential and necessary resources and effort to maximizing SSI eligibility for GA clients. Areas of focus should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. Training workers in SSI eligibility rules and requirements .. Assisting GA clients in pursuing their SSI applications to the extent necessary .. Contracting out responsibility to assist clients with their SSI appeals on a performance basis or bolstering in-house capability, and .. Shifting the emphasis of the employability review to an SSI eligibility focus. 	#24, #25	High	County Planning	Board of Supervisors	Appoint Administrators from Various County Agencies	Within 45 Days
	#25	High	Program Policy	SSA Management	Establish Participatory Process with Community and Staff	Within 6 Months
	#8, #9	High	GA Program	SSA Management	Developed by SSA Staff and Community Advocates	Within 6 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Develop Mission Statement/Statement of Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a community outreach approach to begin work on a vision and supporting mission statement. 	#24	High	County Policy	SSA Management	Developed with Staff and Community Participation	Within 6 Months
	#24	High	SSA Planning	SSA Management	Developed with Staff and Community Participation	Within 6 Months
Identify Administrative Barriers (Related to Structure or Priorities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an outreach approach to begin to improve relationships both internal and external. Submit waivers as needed to implement new direction and focus from the State and Federal levels of the Departments of Aging, Social Service, and Health Services. The intent of waivers is to allow counties the flexibility to provide services in the manner most appropriate for a particular county based on demographics and the availability of service providers. These waivers could provide for the County to perform its own Ombudsman Program, flexibility in the Title 3D-Elder Care Program Title V Program, and Seniors Elder Care and Seniors Health Services Programs. Develop concept paper to consider becoming the grant recipient for MSSP and Linkages. 	#25	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	Through EAAC, SSA Staff, Community Groups, Federal and State Representatives	Within 6 Months
	#26	Medium	Planning	SSA Management	Developed with Community Groups and SSA Staff	Within 6 Months
	#25, #14	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	Developed by SSA Program Staff	Within 6 Months
	#14	Low	Program	SSA Management	Developed by SSA Staff	Within 12 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Develop and Initiate Strategies to Eliminate Barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain concurrence from appropriate entities (i.e., labor organizations, State departments, Federal departments). Develop Memo of Understanding (MOU) with City of Oakland regarding Linkages and Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) for coordination of service for referrals and client case management. Leverage their funds by developing partnerships with foundations i.e., Kaiser, United Way, Bay Area Grant Makers, Koret Foundation. Reevaluate the roles and need for other advisory councils (i.e., Adult Day Health Care Council, Long Term Care Council). Consider combining advisory bodies as part of Commission and develop committee structures to address needs. Secure commitment of various County control and service agencies to enable prompt hiring of the required staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSA Executive Management should pursue, with the County Administrators Office, the funding and commitment to the new staff positions County Personnel should expedite the hiring process 	#25, #27	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	Through County and SSA Staff	Within 12 Months
	#25, #27	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	Participation of Community Groups, Employee Assoc. and Government Representatives	Within 12 Months
	#26, #14	Low	Policy /Operations	SSA Management	Initiative of County and City Officials	Within 18 Months
	#26, #14	Low	Program Operations	SSA Management	Developed Leverage by Community Groups	Within 24 Months
	#25, #14	Low	Program Operations	SSA Management	Through Committee of Advisory Representatives	Within 24 Months
	#15	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through County Administration and SSA Staff	Within 12 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
.. County Data Processing Department should assist in developing the job descriptions and criteria for evaluating candidates						
Recommend SSA Detailed Organizational Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganize the Aging Adult Programs with total support SSA, Commission on Aging, and the community Transfer the child care accounting function currently in Adult's Services to the appropriate Children's Protective Services Unit Perform a comprehensive review of the GA program's administrative processes with the objective of placing greater direct control and accountability for program operations and policy development with SSA and with the Division of Economic Benefits. Suggested areas of focus include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. shifting responsibility for employment and training to DEB, .. giving eligibility workers responsibility for work program referral, monitoring and sanction processes, .. collecting all client overpayments and reimbursements .. performing the front-end employability and medical determinations, and .. responsibility for developing initial legal positions on program issues 	#14, #15, #24, #25	High	Policy	SSA Management	Developed through EAAC, SSA Staff, Community Participation	Within 12 Months
	#14	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Developed with Community Groups	Within 12 Months
	#14, #25	Low	Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Directive	Within 12 Months
	#1, #2, #3 #6, #10	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Developed by Program Staff	Within 12 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Implement New Organizational Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the position descriptions for the appropriate positions Commence a search for the most qualified individuals to fill newly created positions Fill the positions Appoint a representative committee to search for a Director of new department Appoint an Aging Department Director who has the qualifications, has a vision, and the leadership skills to work with staff, Commission, advocates, and providers Dedicate at least two additional Program Specialists exclusively to Information Systems Analysis, and charge them with the duty to coordinate CDS and SSRS activity throughout the Agency Hire a system analyst to initiate the planning for a strategic information system plan for the Agency Hire a programmer analyst to serve as PC Coordinator for the Agency 	#2, #14, #15, #25	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through County and SSA Staff	Within 18 Months
	#2, #14, #15, #25	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Developed by SSA Staff	Within 18 Months
	#2, #14, #15, #25	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#2, #14, #15, #25	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#2, #14, #15, #25	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#14	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#15, #17, #18	Low	Operations	SSA Management	Through County Staff	Within 18 Months
	#15	Low	Operations	SSA Management	Through County Staff	Within 18 Months
	#15	Low	Operations	SSA Management	Through County Staff	Within 18 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Establish Monthly Communications Tool for SSA Redesign (should relate status to all interested parties) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange public hearings and other special events 	#26	High	Communications	SSA Management	Develop Newsletter, Letter to the Staff, Community or Other Mechanism	Within 45 Days
	#26	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	With Cooperation of Community Representatives	Within 12 Months
Develop SSA Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a plan by which SSA management can periodically assess the effectiveness of the organization in serving the needs of the community, clients, and employees Develop a major marketing and public relations program to inform on new appointment and direction with SSA SSA should lead the development of the community-based system of care for Aging and Adult Service with the advice of the Commission on Aging and support of CBO, advocates, and providers Apply for public or private grants and/or discretionary funds or grant programs for special projects Review and evaluate current contractors to ensure that the needs for coordination and cooperation within the service delivery programs are met 	#2, #14, #15, #27	High	Planning	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#27	Medium	Planning	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#26	High	Communications	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#14	Medium	Planning	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#14, #27	High	Planning	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months
	#27	Low	Planning	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 18 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperate with County Data Processing Department to identify means to implement the Case Data Controls Develop an Information Systems Plan for SAWS, CWS/CMS and development of automated solutions for other pressing needs of the Agency Undertaking a major internal review of the GA program's operational policies and practices with the objectives of streamlining processes, improving effectiveness and efficiency, and ameliorating client service. Suggested areas of focus should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. the current sanctions and discontinuance processes, .. the employability classification and medical review processes, .. overpayment and reimbursement practices, and .. coordination with other agencies and groups in the community. Redesigning the approach to employment and training for GA clients.. Areas of focus should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. Leveraging the GA grant by converting to a wage subsidy through a voluntary transitional job program, .. Instituting front-end job search activities for GA applicants, .. Time-limiting workfare assignments, .. Strengthening the sanctions process, and .. accessing increased Federal Food Stamp matching funds. 	#15, #27	Low	Operations	SSA Management	SSA and County Staff	Within 18 Months
	#15, #17, #18	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	By County and SSA Staff	Within 18 Months
	#1, #2, #3 #6, #7, #8 #9, #10 #25, #27	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Participation	Within 12 Months
	#6, #12, #13 #14, #25	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through Staff and Community Participation	Within 12 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
Implement Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance and modify, as need be, outreach efforts to ensure the organization continues to meet changing needs Program Director should develop plans to leverage funds and human resources, the use of the Title V, and the JTPA 3% Set-aside for Older Workers. For example, currently there are \$91,000 available in 3% Set-aside funds and enough funds in Title V to pay for 30-40 positions. Assign seniors to be used in programs within the department wherever appropriate. Examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. as Counselors for Unemployed GA clients .. as Counselors and follow-through staff for Seniors on GA clients pursuing SSI benefits .. as IR providers, as receptionists, as drivers, and as clerical support staff., Contract for part-time nutritionist for State-mandated review of menu or could be provided by County Nutritionist from Highland Hospital Update the Annual Plan through a needs assessment and the examination of the statistical date. Develop implementation plans for the nonfunded objectives 	#2, #14, #15, #25	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Management and Staff	Within 18 Months
	#26	High	Policy/Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Management and Staff	Within 18 Months
	#14	Medium	Program Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Management and Staff	Within 24 Months
	#14, #2	Medium	Program Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 24 Months
	#14	Medium	Program Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff and Community Groups	Within 24 Months
	#14	Low	Program Operations	SSA Management	By Staff with Community Participation	Within 24 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with the following external entities to ensure that the planning is understood and to the extent possible, actively supported: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. the County Data Processing Department .. the Case Data systems .. the other Tier 1 MAGIC transfer counties .. the State Department of Social Services 	#15, #16, #18	Medium	Program Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 18 Months
Develop Procedures and Performance Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement financial management recommendations Develop performance measures and monitoring mechanisms Review the adopted mission statement regularly Ensure the mechanisms that are implemented to support the organization are periodically reviewed and modified accordingly Review Ombudsman, Out-of-Home Placement, Elder Care, APS, and IHSS potential overlap of duties Keep track of unfilled positions on the Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. notify the appointing bodies to ensure full membership 	#4, #14, #27	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
	#19-23, #28-33	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
	#27	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff and Community	Within 24 Months
	#27	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
	#27	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
	#14	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
	#14	Low	Operations	SSA Management	By SSA Staff	Within 24 Months

AGENCY ACTION PLAN

ACTIVITY	RECOMMENDATION ADDRESSED	PRIORITY	ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS	RESPONSIBLE ENTITY	IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM	COMPLETION TIMEFRAME
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. track the terms of existing members and records of absenteeism .. make recommendations of replacements .. make recommendations for change in make up of Commission. 						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that no service providers be members of the Commission (avoids conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict). We recommend this item be included in the County-wide Study on Commissions 	#14, #27	Low	Policy	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff	Within 30 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement control, audit and security recommendations 	#19-23, #28-33 #27	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff	Within 24 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with the Case Data Joint Committee to assign a priority to the specific logging off problem with the Case Data System, in order to ensure that the vendor does fix the problem 	#16	High	Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff	Within 6 Months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing an activity based analysis and detailed time study of worker roles and responsibilities with the objectives of identifying redundant or unnecessary activities, improving productivity and support current cost allocation processes. Areas of focus should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> .. worker specialization such as the front-end eligibility process and maintenance units, .. filing requirements, .. caseload standards, and .. caseflow sequences and processing such as the transfer desk. 	#1-5 #6-11 #12, #13	Medium	Operations	SSA Management	Through SSA Staff	Within 24 Months

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Alameda County Social Services Agency

Our Mission

The Social Services Agency provides financial assistance, services for children and adults who are at risk, employment services, and leadership in identifying and addressing community needs.

Our Values

We believe people thrive when they are treated fairly, listened to, involved and have the opportunity to contribute, learn, grow and advance. Therefore, we promote these values:

SERVICE

by emphasizing social responsibility and concern for others

OPENNESS

by building relationships based on honesty and trust

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

by providing opportunities for continuing growth

COMMITMENT

by instilling pride in the delivery of social services

UNITY

by working together as a team to reach common goals

DIVERSITY

by acknowledging and appreciating differences

DIGNITY

by treating everyone with fairness and respect

RESPONSIBILITY

by expecting individual and mutual accountability

EXCELLENCE

by empowering people to achieve the highest level of performance



APPENDIX B

APPENDIX B INTERVIEWEES

Agler, John	Fraud Investigator, District Attorney's Office
Allen, Mark	Staff, Board of Supervisor
Allison, Carol	Staff, GAIN
Aragon, Bill	Member, Board of Supervisors
Archuleta, Kathy	Director, PIC Department
Azeb, Michael	Staff, Refugee Assistance
Baisey, Linda	Staff, General Assistance
Barnes, Ed	Director, Berkeley Community Law Center
Belknap, Dan	415 Society
Blackwell, Angela	Director, Urban Strategies Council
Blankenship, Bonnie	Staff, AFDC
Blankenship, Liz	Staff, General Assistance
Bond, Thomas	Labor Representative, Professionals Association of County Employees (PACE)
Borges, Vera	Commissioner, Department on Aging
Boutte, Edna	Staff, General Assistance
Bradley, Sharon	Staff, AFDC
Brass-King, Debra	Staff, General Assistance
Brown, Marylyn	Staff, Economic Benefits Department
Bucher, Al	Assistant District Attorney, Family Support Division
Burns, Naomi	Director, County of Alameda Personnel Services
Cadiz, Ding	Staff, General Assistance
Caig, Julie	Staff, Information Systems
Campbell, Edward	Member, Board of Supervisors
Chan, Henry	Staff, Guardianship Program
Cheung, Fernando	Director, Asian Community Services
Churchill, Earl	Staff, Public Guardian's Office
Clark, Alton	Staff, AFDC
Clegg, Sofia	Director, Spectrum Community Services, Inc.
Cooper, George	Staff, Foster Care
Cooper, Verneatha	Coordinator, GAIN GIS and PC LAN
Davidson, Bobbie	Staff, AFDC
Davis, Nora	Commissioner, Department on Aging
DeBonis, Linda	Staff, Refugee Assistance
Dengler, Patricia	Staff, Child Protective Services
Dodd, Caryl Ann	Program Services Manager, County of San Mateo
Donnelly, Terri	Staff, General Assistance
Duncan, Tom	Principal Analyst, County Administrator's Office
Dung, Nguyen	Staff, AFDC
Ealy, Dolores	Staff, General Assistance



APPENDIX B INTERVIEWEES

(continued)

Embry-Nimmer, Zenobia	Director, Emergency Services Network
Englehard, Pat	Assistant Director, Economic Benefits Department
Escamilla, Rosa	Labor Representative, SEIU 535
Fabella, Dana	Director, Children's Placement Services
Farkas, Bernie	MIS Director, Santa Clara County Social Services Agency
Faulkner, Leuna	Staff, General Assistance
Ford, James	Staff, General Assistance
Ford, Pat	Executive Secretary, SEIU Locals #616
Frank, Evelyn	Director, Legal Aid Society
Frank, Polly	Staff, General Assistance
Garcia, Jane	Director, Clinica de la Raza
Garza, Hector	GA Program Manager, County of Santa Clara
Gatison, Marva	Staff, General Assistance
Geiselman, Judy	Senior Personnel Officer, SSA
Ghiorso, Marilyn	Staff, General Assistance
Gibbert, Mary	Commissioner, Department on Aging
Gogna, Carls	Staff, General Assistance
Goode, Lydia	Staff, Public Guardian's Office
Green, Sheila	Staff, Child Protective Services
Gregory, Barbara	Director, Community Adult Health Program
Grisso, Edna	Staff, AFDC
Hampton, Debra	Staff, General Assistance
Hedani, Barbara	Staff, Child Welfare Services
Heiseley, Lynn	Fiscal Officer, County of Sacramento
Henderson, Millicent	Staff, Foster Care
Hewitt, George	Assistant Director, Management Services Department
Houston, Don	Staff, AFDC
Hovesplan, Nick	Staff, County of Fresno
Howie, Harp	Coordinator, Oakland Independence Support Center
Humphrey-Williams, Charlotte	Director, San Joaquin County Aging Children's and Community Services
Hutchinson, Kathleen	Staff, General Assistance
Jacobsen, Richard	Director, San Diego County Department of Social Services
Jager, Debbie	GA Reimbursements, County of San Mateo
Johnson, Jamie	Staff, General Assistance
Johnson, Will	Chief, Management Analysis Division
Jordan, Daniel	Director, Mental Health Advocates



APPENDIX B INTERVIEWEES

(continued)

Jurich, Meg	Staff, Child Welfare Services
King, Mary	President, Board of Supervisors
Knudson, Helen	Director, Social Services Agency
Kretz, Linda	Administrative Assistant, Department on Aging
L'Esperance, Jill	Staff, Budget Office
Lai, Elaine	Staff, Adult Protective Services
Lane, Esther	Coordinator, Welfare Rights Association
Laube, Chloe	Director, Children's Protective Services
LeHouillier, Claudette	Staff, AFDC
Levy, Harvey	Program Manager, General Assistance
Lomelino, Carl	Staff, GAIN
Long-Scott, Ethyl	Executive Director, Women's Economic Agenda Project
Lopez, Julia	Director of Social Services, County of San Francisco
Lu, Mona	Staff, AFDC
Lum, Elsie	Staff, County Development/Training Unit
Mallery, Jo Ann	GA Supervisor, County of San Mateo
Margrave, Wyston	Staff, IHSS
Maryatt, Martha	Staff, Adult Services
McCormick, Tom	Director, Adult Service's Division
McKissick, Dane	Staff, General Assistance
McMurray	Information Officer, County of Santa Clara
Mendonca, Dennis	Staff, Child Protective Services
Miller, Gloria	Staff, General Assistance
Morales, Linda	Staff, Clinica de la Raza
Moreno, Albert	Staff, Child Protective Services
Nelson, Teresa	Staff, General Assistance
O'Connell, Pat	Auditor/Controller, Alameda County
Phillips, Patsy	Staff, Child Welfare Services
Phillips, Salome	Staff, Human Outreach Agency
Phommachit, Simon	Staff, General Assistance
Puglia, Frank	Staff, County of Fresno
Rabinovitz, Lillian	Founder, Grey Panthers in California
Redding, Shirley	Staff, General Assistance
Reddy, Jane	Welfare Bureau Chief, County of Sacramento
Reeves, Paul	Program Manager, Special Investigations Unit
Reyes, Vincent, Jr.	Multilingual/Cultural Coordinator, County Administrator's Office



APPENDIX B INTERVIEWEES

(continued)

Rigney, Virginia	Staff, Child Protective Services
Roberts, Don	Commissioner, Department on Aging
Robinson, Elliott	Staff, Cost Control Unit
Roca, Patricia	Staff, Child Welfare
Rosenberg, Paul	Principal Administrative Analyst, San Francisco City and County Department of Social Services
Rowin, Lee	GA Program Coordinator, County of Santa Clara
Rubman, Lewin	Staff, AFDC
Sakai, Bob	Analyst, County Administrator's Office
Sanden, Jackie	Staff, Public Guardian/Conservator's Office
Saunders, Moses	Member of Committee, Department of Aging
Schlant, Bill	Labor Representative, PJI LOC#1
Schneider, Irene	Staff, Child Welfare
Schroeder, Pat	Director, Bay Area Older Adult Services
Schultz, Maureen	Staff, Department of Aging
Schwab, Charles	Staff, GAIN
Scruggs, JoAnne	Staff, AFDC
Shauf, Rebecca	Staff, AFDC
Silva, Charlene	Director, Aging and Adult Services for San Mateo County
Singh, Estrella	Staff, IHSS
Skaggs-Kelly, Elizabeth	Staff, General Assistance
Skillings, Lynn	Appeals Advocate, General Assistance
Smith, Darlene	Director, General Services Agency
Smith, Roland	Chair, Social Services Commission
Smith, Sylvia	Assistant Director, Human Services Department
Snedden, Bev	Staff, General Assistance
Solis, Mario	Staff, SSA Director's Office
Stewart, Irene	GA Program Specialist, County of San Mateo
Szalay, Steven	County Administrator, Alameda County
Tarail, Ted	Member, Congress of California Seniors
Tillman, Cliff	Labor Representative, SEIU 616
Valdivia, Laura	Civil Rights/Affirmative Action Officer, SSA
Walker, Clayton	Staff, County of Fresno
Weidinger, Elizabeth	Staff, Child Protective Services
Whalley, Ann	Consultant, SSRS Specialist
Whittington, Rita	Staff, AFDC
Widener, Warren	Member, Board of Supervisors



APPENDIX B INTERVIEWEES

(continued)

Williams, Dave	Director, Financial Services
Winkle, Kytrie	Staff, General Assistance
Yim, Linda	Analyst, County Data Processing Department
Young, Orah	Director, Legal Assistance for Seniors
Zamora, Lila	Staff, SIU



APPENDIX C

Appendix C

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Letter, Review of Affirmative Action Plans City of Dublin, from Paul S. Rankin, Assistant to the City Manager, April 18, 1986

Letter, HRC Committees, from Noel Folsom, HRC Staff, June 17, 1988

Human Relations Commission Responsibilities, Human Services Department, July 19, 1990

Letter to Governor George Deukmejian, from Joy Johnson, Chairperson, Human Relations

Commission, October 7, 1987

Letter to Connie Dyer, Director, East Oakland Youth Development Corporation, from Noel W. Folsom, Human Relations Commission Liason, September 20, 1988

Manual, Alameda County SSA Administrative Rules/Procedures, 1985 and updated

Workbook, ET Training AFDC, Program Support Staff, date unknown

Information Packet, County of San Mateo, Department of Health Services, Aging and Adult Services Division, 1991

Mission Statement, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, date unknown

Organizational Purpose Statement, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, date unknown

Homelessness in Alameda County, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, 1990

A Resource Guide, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, 1990

Homelessness in Oakland, Emergency Services Network of Alameda County, 1990

Alameda County Value-Based Budgeting. "Achieving Progress in Government", County of Alameda, April 1991





C O U N T Y A D M I N I S T R A T O R

May 28, 1991

STEVEN C. SZALAY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATORSUSAN S. MURANISHI
ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATORBoard of Supervisors
Administration Building
Oakland, CA 94612SUBJECT: Social Services Agency Performance Audit -
Selection of a Study Consultant

Dear Board Members:

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that your Board:

- Approve in principle the selection of Deloitte & Touche as the consultants to conduct the Performance Audit of the Social Services Agency; and
- Authorize the Purchasing Agent, in consultation with the Project Taskforce, to finalize a contract with Deloitte & Touche.

SUMMARY:

The Social Services Agency Project Taskforce has completed a comprehensive process for selecting a consultant to perform the audit. It is requested that the Board approve their recommendations and authorize the Purchasing Agent to develop a final contract with Deloitte & Touche.

DISCUSSION/FINDING:

The Social Services Agency Performance Audit Taskforce (See attachment A) has completed a comprehensive selection process for selecting a consultant to conduct the performance audit of the Agency. The process included:

- Development of study criteria and a scope of work upon which a Request for Interest and a Request for Proposal were based (See attachment B).
- A review of the responses of four bidders who expressed interest in performing the audit.
- A screening of the four bidder's responses to the Request for Proposal and the selection of three for interview.
- Personal interview of the key staff members of the three bidders.
- Reference checks of agencies for whom the consultants had performed similar studies.

May 28, 1991

Based upon its evaluation of each bidder, it is recommended that your Board award the Performance Audit of the Social Services Agency to Deloitte & Touche. Deloitte & Touche presented a thorough understanding of the assignment, strong expertise among its project team, excellent minority participation, and very sound references from other governmental agencies for whom similar studies were conducted.

The primary areas upon which the Study will focus include:

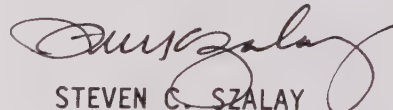
- Organizational Structure
- Personnel
- Program Evaluation
- Automation
- Commissions
- Facilities

With your approval, the Purchasing Agent will complete final negotiations within 2 weeks and the consultant is expected to begin the actual audit immediately. A final report to your Board is tentatively scheduled for your meeting of November 5, 1991.

FINANCING:

The Deloitte & Touche proposal was an all-inclusive bid of \$247,300. They committed no less than \$42,000 in services would be provided by Disadvantaged, Women, or Minority-Owned Business Enterprises (D/W/MBE). Funding for this contract is available within budgeted appropriations. It is anticipated that the Study findings and recommendations will result in savings and efficiencies far in excess of the cost of the project.

Very truly yours,



STEVEN C. SZALAY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

SCS/TD:ph
Attachment
7024c

cc: Members, Project Taskforce
Kelvin Booty, County Counsel
All Agency/Department Heads
Affected Employee Organizations

Members Performance Audit Project Taskforce

Mary King, President Board of Supervisors

Don Perata, Member, Board of Supervisors (Represented by Mark Allen)

Zenobia Embry/Nimmer, Director Emergency Services Network

Patrick O'Connell, Auditor/Controller

Pat Ford, Executive Secretary, SEIU Local 616

Roland Smith, Chairman, Social Services Agency Advisory Commission

Julia Lopez, Director, Social Services Agency, County of San Francisco

Helen Knudson, Director, Social Services Agency, County of Alameda

Gary Holm, Purchasing Agent, County of Alameda

Tom Duncan, Principal Administrative Analyst, CAO

On motion of Supervisor Perata, seconded by Supervisor Widener,
the FOREGOING MINUTE ORDER was passed and adopted by the following vote of the
Board of Supervisors, County of Alameda, State of California on June 4, 1991,
to wit:

APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED:

AYES: Supervisors Campbell, Perata, Widener and President King - 4
NOES: None
EXCUSED: None

* * * * *

FILE # 5498
AGENDA #9

MINUTE ORDER

2107B/LM8/Pg.18

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY
SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Proposals Due: April 30, 1991
Before 2:00 pm to

Purchasing Agent
General Services Agency
County of Alameda
4400 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland, CA 94619
(415) 535-6250

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE ALAMEDA COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

1. BACKGROUND

The Social Services Agency is the second largest agency in Alameda County government. It has a staff of approximately 1,600 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$400,000,000. The Agency has ten offices in five cities in the County.

In November, 1988, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors adopted a policy to conduct a performance audit of a County department or agency annually. The audit is meant to be a "value for money" study focusing on three areas: economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The purpose of the audit is to assist the agency or department being studied to achieve improvements in their operation and effectiveness of service delivery.

The Performance Review Committee has selected the Social Services Agency as the next County agency to be reviewed. The Committee has also named a Project Task Force to: define the scope of the study; prepare the RFP for selecting the consultant to perform the study; select the consultant, and act as a resource to the consultant during the study.

The Project Task Force has identified the following areas for study and recommendations. These areas are: a review of the organization structure and human resources in the agency and a review of the Social Services programs.

2. RFP SCOPE:

A. Organizational Structure

The current core structure of the Social Services Agency was established in the mid-1970's. It was designed along programmatically functional lines based upon State and Federal requirements and claiming parameters. Since then, constraints on funding for non-mandated services and support functions have increased steadily. In light of this change, it would be useful to know whether the current organizational structure still serves to maximize revenue and resources.

Questions:

- o Are programs appropriately placed within the current SSA organizational structure, e.g. Dept. on Aging? Recommendations?
- o What changes could be made to increase public access for services while maximizing the revenue available for the broad array of County programs in the 1990's?

- o Does the current structure for Adult and Aging programs maximize the availability of and linkages between services for the County's population of disabled adults and frail elderly? And if not, what could be changed to improve services?
- o Does the current structure provide for effective inter-agency and intra-agency communications? If not, what can be done to improve communications?

B. PERSONNEL

The Agency has had difficulty recruiting and retaining employees. The tasks of all staff are demanding: eligibility staff is guided by frequently changing, complex regulations and is highly detailed; the services staff are required to have advanced degrees and respond to violent and disturbing, life-threatening casework situations. Turnover reduces the overall efficiency of the Agency and places pressure on more experienced employees. Support and development through training has diminished as funds for non-mandated training have been reduced.

Questions:

- o What strategies could be implemented that would encourage candidates to accept job offers and then commit to continued employment in the Agency?
- o The Agency has just implemented a new program, Motivating Positive Performance. What additional components would enhance its value to the Agency and the employees?
- o How do the elements of management practices such as conferences, unit meetings, evaluations, employee bulletins, and in-service and outside training reinforce or reduce employee commitment in the Agency? Recommendations?
- o How can the Agency improve its management and personnel practices to mitigate the number of grievances and employee complaints?

C. Program Evaluation

Most of the programs that the Social Services Agency administers are prescribed by the State and Federal governments with strict funding guidelines for administrative activities. Because the effectiveness of these programs is periodically evaluated by independent administrative units like the General Accounting Office (GAO), the Legislative Analysts Office (LAO) of the State Department of Social Services, local evaluation focused on client outcomes rarely occurs.

Questions:

- o What is the actual cost benefit to the County in outstationing eligibility workers in CBO health clinics from the perspectives of service enhancement, long term cost avoidance and current revenue enhancement?

- o How effective is the current Social Services Agency client complaint procedure in assisting clients in resolving their problems with Agency procedures and decisions? Recommendations?
- o How can the General Assistance and the Public Guardian/Conservator programs be modified to provide improved results for clients in a cost-effective manner.

D. Automation

The Agency uses a variety of large, multi-county maintained, mainframe programs to support its activities and to store case record and management information. Over 50,000 active cases are tracked and approximately \$300 million in warrants are authorized through these systems annually. Statewide automation of manual activities is in progress but several years down the road. Budget reductions in prior years have left few technical staff to work on increasing the number of manual activities that can be automated.

Questions:

- o What cost-effective strategies might be employed to expedite the expansion of automated systems?
- o What cost-effective strategies might be employed to streamline systems and procedures agency-wide?
- o How can internal controls be maintained or strengthened in regard to the authorization of benefit payments, especially warrants, as automated expands?

E. Commissions

The Agency has staffed the Social Services Commission and the Children's Interest Commission since their inception. With the passage of Prop 13 and the dissolution of the Human Relations Department and Office of Commissions Affairs, the responsibility for staffing the Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Relations Commission were passed on to the Social Services Agency. Staffing and costs were to be absorbed within Agency resources. Responsibility for the Self-Esteem Task Force and the Veterans Affairs Commission were assumed in the late 80's.

Questions:

- o How can Commissions be restructured/streamlined within the Social Services Agency to allow them to be more effective and attract broad public representation and interest?

F. FACILITIES

Social services are provided in a variety of buildings throughout the County.

Questions:

- o Do County facilities need to be improved or modified to better serve clients and SSA employees?

3. SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Responses to this request will be evaluated by the Project Task Force using the selection criteria below. Responses will be ranked according to the total point score with the firm receiving the highest score ranked first. Proposers should address each of the evaluation criteria in their response. The Task Force may wish to interview the top ranked firms before making a final contract award recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

4. CRITERIA

	<u>Maximum Points</u>
A. Proposal demonstrated understanding of the County's performance audit need with respect to the Social Services Agency.	5
B. Demonstrated creativity and practicality of audit approach and methodology.	15
C. Knowledge and experience relevant to services to be provided to perform successfully under the contract as demonstrated by client references.	10
D. Ability to complete work in a timely manner as required under the contract.	10
E. Financial stability of the firm.	10
F. The number, level and experience of personnel who will be assigned to this project and the relevance of their experience to the services provided as demonstrated by resumes.	15
G. Project cost.	20
H. D/W/MBE ownership of the firm or willingness to enter into a joint venture agreement with a D/W/MBE firm for the audit.	<u>15</u>
	<u><u>100</u></u>

5. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

04/03/91	County distributes RFP.
04/17/91	Bidder's Conference (1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.) at: Alameda County General Services Agency 4400 MacArthur Blvd. Oakland, CA 94619
04/30/91	RFP responses due.
04/30 - 05/14/91	Task Force evaluates responses.

05/17/91	Task Force interviews top ranked bidders (8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.)
06/04/91	Task Force makes final contract award recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.
06/05/91	Consultant starts performance audit.
09/05/91	Consultant submits draft report and recommendations to Task Force and receives comments.
10/31/91	Consultant submits final report and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

6. BUDGET FOR AUDIT

The County has established a budget range for this audit up to approximately \$250,000.

7. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this request, the term County refers to the County of Alameda, California, the organization soliciting bids for the provision of services. The terms bidder, proposer, Contractor, vendor, provider, etc., refer to the company, agency, or responder to the request.

8. PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals should be as informative as possible in describing the capabilities and financial condition of the firm, qualifications of the audit staff, and relevant knowledge and experience. Proposers should submit resumes of the project audit and management staff, audited financial records for at least the last three years, and references of current and former clients for whom similar performance audit work was performed. Proposals should follow the same general order of the RFP.

9. REJECTION OF PROPOSALS

The County reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received by reason of this request. The County shall not pay for any information herein requested, nor is it liable for any costs incurred by the Contractors.

10. DISCLOSURE OF PROPOSAL CONTENT

Alameda County requires that, at the conclusion of the selection process, the contents of all proposals be placed in the public domain and be open to inspection by interested parties. Trade secrets and/or proprietary information that are recognized as such and protected by law may be withheld if clearly identified as such in the proposal.

11. PROPOSAL OBLIGATION AND DISPOSITION

All proposals become the property of the County of Alameda and shall not be returned to the vendor.

12. ECONOMY OF PRESENTATION

Proposals should not contain promotional or display materials and should address the requirements set forth in this request for proposal.

13. ALAMEDA COUNTY STATUTES AND RULES

The terms and condition of the RFP, and any resulting contract or activities based upon the RFP, shall be in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws and regulations and Alameda County statutes and rules.

14. SIGNATURE OF VENDOR AGENT

Each vendor's proposal and any clarifications to that proposal shall be signed by an officer of the company or a designated agent empowered to bind the company in a contract.

15. INQUIRIES

Please address all questions to:

Gary Holm, Purchasing Agent
c/o: Alameda County Purchasing Department, General Services Agency
4400 MacArthur Boulevard
Oakland, CA 94619
Telephone: (415) 535-6250

16. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Interested Contractor shall submit ten (10) copies of their bid response. Any questions concerning this bid should be addressed to the Purchasing Agent of Alameda County.

17. COUNTY'S RIGHTS RESERVED

Any award resulting from this request for proposal shall be made to the Contractor that submits the response that, in the County's opinion, best serves the overall interest of the County.

The County reserves the right to award this contract not necessarily to the Contractor with the lowest price but the firm which the County determines will provide the best match to the requirement of the RFP.

18. SELECTION NOTIFICATION

After evaluation of the proposals, all proposers shall be notified of the Taskforce's recommendation for award.

19. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The terms and conditions specified in this request for proposal are informational and do not constitute a complete recitation of the terms and conditions to appear in the contract to be let with the selected Contractor.

20. TERMINATION

If the County determines that the Contract has failed, or will fail, through any cause, to fulfill in a timely and proper manner its obligations under the contract, or if the County determines that the Contractor has violated or will violate any of the covenants, agreements, or stipulations of the contract, the County shall thereupon have the right to terminate the contract.

In exercising said right of termination, the County shall provide the Contractor written notice of the performance, failures and/or violations and/or conditions endangering performance with sufficient specificity to permit the Contractor an opportunity to cure. The notice shall specify the effective date of termination which shall be no sooner than thirty (30) days following notification except in case of urgent need or emergency in which case termination may be sooner than thirty (30) days.

Should the Contractor cure the failures, violations, and conditions specified in the termination to the satisfaction of the County, then the termination notice shall be rescinded. Such rescission shall not prejudice the County from issuing a further written notice or notices of termination upon the discovery of other failures of performance, violations, or conditions endangering performance.

If, after such notice, the Contractor fails to cure the failures, and/or violations and/or conditions specified in the notice or notices to the satisfaction of the County, the County shall issue the Contractor an order to stop work. Prior to the issuance of an order to stop work, all obligations under the contract remain in full force and effect.

In the event of termination of the contract by the County for cause in the manner specified above, the Contractor shall be liable for all costs incurred by the County as a result of its providing the services required of the Contractor under the contract to the extent that said costs incurred by the County exceed the amount the County would have paid the Contractor if termination had not resulted. The contractor shall reimburse the County for such costs.

21. TERMINATION BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT

The County and the Contractor may otherwise agree in writing to terminate the contract in a manner consistent with mutually agreed upon specific terms and conditions.

22. INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Contractor shall conform with all insurance requirements as stated below:

A. Workers' compensation:

- a. Statutory compensation coverage.
- b. Employer's liability insurance with limit not less than \$100,000 per occurrence.

B. Comprehensive general liability:

- a. Bodily injury
- b. Property damage
- c. Blanket contractual
- d. Cross liability or severability of interests clause
- e. Minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit bodily injury and property damage.

C. Comprehensive automobile liability

- a. Owned automobiles, if any
- b. Non-owned automobiles, if any
- c. Hired automobiles
- d. Cross liability or severability of interests clause in policy
- e. Minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence combined single limit bodily injury and property damage.

D. Professional liability

- a. For professional employees licensed as a condition of employment, insuring against error or omission in rendering or failing to render professional services.
- b. Minimum \$1,000,000.
- c. The Contractor's insurance must act as primary coverage, not excess or contributing coverage, with regard to any contract with Alameda County.

A completed insurance exhibit must be submitted by the successful Contractor before the contract can begin. The Contractor shall be responsible for maintaining such insurance during the life of the contract.

23. HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

It is the expressed understanding of the County and the Contractor that the Contractor shall provide the actual services unless the County issues an order to stop work.

The Contractor expressly agrees to assume all the risks inherent in the provision of services and agrees to indemnify, to defend at its own expense, to save and hold harmless the County of Alameda, its officers, agents, servants, and employees from all losses, claims, actions, lawsuits, damages, judgments, or liabilities of any kind whatsoever arising out of the acts or omissions of the Contractor's operation or maintenance of the aforesaid program of services or the performance of the Contractor's obligations under this contract including, but not limited to, claims, demands, or judgments deriving from alleged professional malpractice of any of the Contractor's employees or subcontractors. The Contractor expressly agrees that the Contractor and not Alameda County shall be liable for payment of any judgments against the Contractor or its officers, directors, agents, servants, employees, or subcontractors arising out of the services to be rendered pursuant to the contract.

County of Alameda agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Contractor, its officers, employees, and agents, from all acts, claims, liabilities and losses by whomever asserted arising out of acts or omissions of the County of Alameda.

The foregoing provisions under this paragraph to the contrary notwithstanding, neither the County nor the Contractor will assume responsibility for actions, lawsuits, defenses, claims or liabilities or any kind whatsoever arising out of claims or judgments for "punitive damages".

This section (Hold Harmless Agreement), shall survive the termination of the contract.

24. NON-DISCRIMINATION

Contractor assures that it will comply with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and that no person shall, on the ground of race, creed, color, disability, sex or national origin, age, religion, sexual orientation, Vietnam Era Veteran's status, political affiliation, or any other non-merit factors be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits or, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under this Agreement.

25. EMPLOYMENT ELIGIBILITY

The Contractor is responsible for determining that persons providing services under this contract provide to the Contractor the necessary documentation to establish identity and employment eligibility as required by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Failure of the Contractor to meet this requirement will result in the termination of the contract.

26. DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Contractor and Contractor's employees shall comply with the County's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace. Neither Contractor nor Contractor's employees shall unlawfully manufacture, distribute dispense, possess or use controlled substances, as defined in 21 U.S. Code, Section 812, including marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and amphetamines, at any County facility or work site. If Contractor or any employee of Contractor is convicted or pleads nolo contendere to a criminal drug statute violation occurring at a County facility or work site, the Contractor within five days thereafter shall notify the head of the County department/agency for which the contract services are performed. Violation of this provision shall constitute a material breach of this Agreement.

27. USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY

Contractor shall not use County premises, property (including equipment, instruments, and supplies) or personnel for any purpose other than in the performance of his/her obligations under this Agreement.

28. WARRANTY AGAINST CONTINGENT FEES

The Contractor shall agree to warrant that no person or selling agency has been employed or retained to solicit and secure this contract upon an agreement of understanding for commission, percentage, brokerage, or contingency except bonafide employees or selling agents maintained by the Contractor for the purpose of securing business.

29. SUB-CONTRACTS

Contractor shall guarantee that for all sub-contracts entered into by the Contractor for the purpose of completing the provisions of the contract, the subcontractor shall meet all of the provisions of the RFP and all applicable federal, state, and local rules, regulations, and licensing laws. The County also has the right of refusal of any and all subcontractors.

30. SECURITY OF RECORDS

All records under this contract are the property of Alameda County. The Contractor shall agree to maintain the confidentiality of the records as is required by law. Records will be kept in a location which guarantees confidentiality and security. In the event of a contract termination, the original records shall be returned to the County.

31. SECURITY OF DATA

Some data files of the County are of a confidential nature. The Contractor's employees shall be allowed access to these files only as needed for their duties related to the contract and in accordance with applicable laws and the rules established by the Custodian of the records. The Contractor shall honor or establish policies and procedures for safeguarding the confidentiality of such data, and may be liable civilly or criminally under privacy legislation for negligent release of such information.

32. CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL

The County may request replacement of any Contractor personnel believed unable to carry out the responsibilities of the contract and shall reserve the right to approve all appointments of Contractor personnel.

33. CONFLICT BETWEEN TERMS

The County reserves the right to accept or reject any exception taken by the Contractor to the terms and conditions of this request for proposal.

34. WAIVER OF INFORMALITIES

The County reserves the right to waive any and all informalities in proposals if such waiver does not substantially change the offer or provide a competitive advantage to any Contractor.

35. CONTRACTOR'S COOPERATION

The Contractor shall, at all times, observe and comply with all federal, state, local, and municipal laws, ordinances, rules and regulations in any manner affecting the contract. The Contractor shall maintain regular communications with the Project Taskforce and shall actively cooperate in all matters pertaining to this contract.

36. ADJUSTMENT TO PRICE

Changes in contractual provisions or services to be furnished under the contract may be made only in writing and must be approved by the County of Alameda and the agent of the Contractor. Should a decision be made to change the scope of the contract, the County and the Contractor shall mutually agree to an adjusted contract price, if necessary.

37. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Neither the Contractor nor the contracting agency shall publish any findings based on data obtained from the operation of this contract without the prior consent of the other party, whose written consent shall not be unreasonably withheld.

38. RESEARCH

No research projects involving the use of information from records examined and/or compiled in the course of the project shall be conducted without the prior written consent of the County.

39. ROYALTIES AND INVENTIONS

County shall have a royalty-free, exclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish, use, and to authorize others to do so, all original computer programs, writing, sound recordings, pictorial reproductions, drawings, and other works of similar nature produced in the course of or under the contract, and Contractor shall not publish any such material without prior written consent of County.

3447P

